

P. O. angl.

bc

Fullerton

THE COUNTESS DE BONNEVAL:

HER LIFE AND LETTERS.

BY

LADY GEORGIANA FULLERTON.

"On veut des romans, que ne regarde-t-on de près à l'histoire?"

M. GUIZOT, *Revue des Deux-Mondes*.

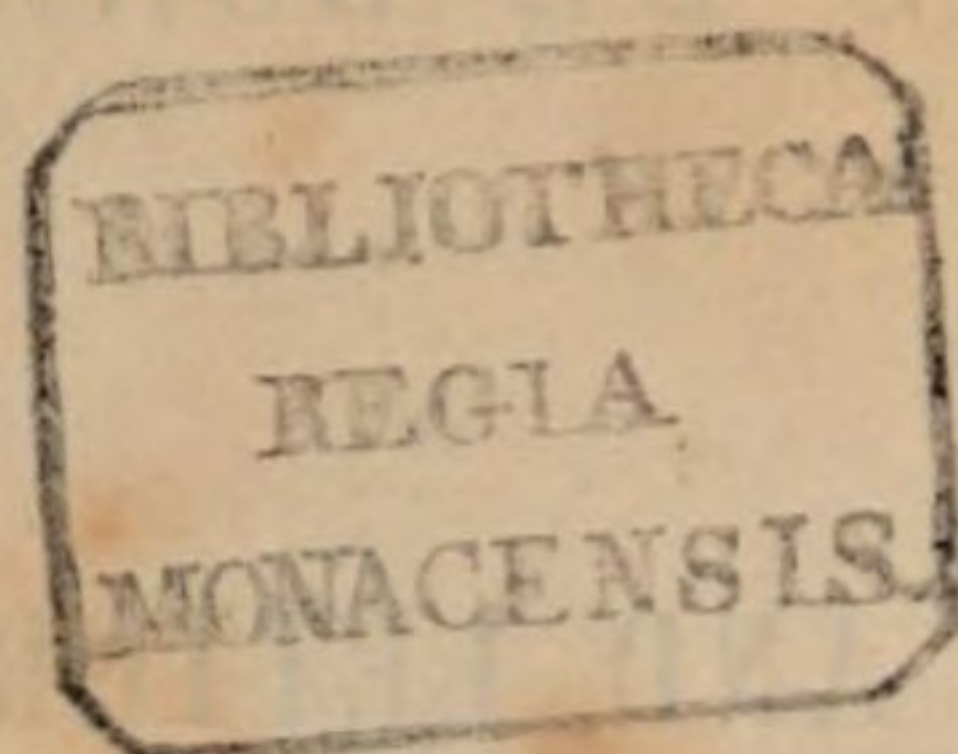
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1858.

The right of Translation is reserved.



LONDON:
R. BORN, PRINTER, GLOUCESTER STREET, PARK STREET,
CAMDEN TOWN.

PREFACE.

THE lady whose history forms the groundwork of the following sketch, and whose letters are for the first time published in English, was connected by birth and marriage with a number of persons who played a conspicuous part in the courts and camps of Europe during the earlier portion of the eighteenth century; that is, at a period when Paris was universally con-

sidered as the capital of the civilised world.

The age in which her lot was cast, and the names which present themselves in connection with that of the Countess de Bonneval lend a peculiar interest to the brief notices of her fate, which are to be met with in the writers of that period.

By a careful examination of the memoirs of the time, through isolated facts casually recorded by contemporary historians, but chiefly by means of her own letters, accidentally preserved and transmitted to posterity, an attempt has been made to study the character, to reproduce the features, to present, as it were, to the readers the picture of a person whom M. Sainte-Beuve, in his "Causeries du Lundi," introduces to our notice as "one of the most pure and, at the time of the Regency,

one of the most rare examples of female virtue; a graceful exception to the general profligacy of that era."

This work is not a biography, and still less a novel; but rather a sketch, in which imagination has ventured to fill up the scanty outlines of history, following step by step the indications it affords, and seeking rather to guess than to invent, to interpret than to originate.

Everybody is probably acquainted with the name of the Comte de Bonneval, whose follies and crimes, whose exploits and misfortunes, gave occasion even during his lifetime to the publication of spurious memoirs, which he designates in his letters as "an ill-written romance, full of gross inventions and glaring falsehoods." His numerous adventures and his military prowess were in reality sufficiently remark-

able to attach to his name a certain celebrity.

In the notes which accompany this story extracts are given from the Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne, those of St. Simon, and M. Sainte-Beuve's Essay, which will serve to put the reader in possession, should his memory not recall them, of the principal historical features of M. de Bonneval's extraordinary career. In order justly to appreciate the character of his wife, it is necessary to be acquainted with the history of the extraordinary man on whom she bestowed a heart that never faltered in its allegiance. Her letters are full of beauties of thought and expression, and marked by touches of deep feeling, which would have deserved an abler translator, and a more skilful interpreter.

It only remains to be added that this

work was originally written in French, and published in Paris. Several alterations have been made in this English Edition. Passages have been remodelled in order to adapt them to the genius of the language, and considerable additions have been introduced into the narrative.

work was originally written in French, and published in Paris. Several alterations have been made in this English edition. Passages have been remodelled in order to adapt them to the genius of the language, and considerable additions have been introduced into the narrative.

THE COUNTESS DE BONNEVAL.

First Chapter.

“ROMANTIC, tender, visionary, mild,
Affectionate, reflecting, when a child,
With fear instinctive she from harshness fled,
And gentle tears for all who suffered shed.
Tales of misfortune touched her generous heart,
Of maidens left, or lovers forced to part.
Arabian nights’ and Persian tales she read,
With long romances, with adventures fed
Her stirring thoughts, and dreamed of warlike fights
Of captive heroes, and victorious knights.”—CRABBE.

“The gods are deaf to hot and peevish vows ;
They are polluted offerings.”—SHAKESPEARE.

“A fool with more of wit than half mankind ;

* * * * *

Blest with each gift of nature and of art,
And wanting nothing but an honest heart.”—DRYDEN.

IN the bosom of a brilliant, refined, but licentious society, in one of the aristocratic mansions of that Paris of the eighteenth cen-

tury, which, thanks to the memoirs and letters of the time, we feel so intimately acquainted with, a few years before the death of Lewis the Fourteenth, was born Judithe Charlotte de Gontaut, third daughter of the Marquis de Biron, and of Marie Antoinette de Nogent, niece of the eccentric Duc de Lauzun. Fénelon was related to her family, and the Duc de St. Simon was her father's dearest friend.

The noblest houses of France were connected by birth or by marriage with that of the Gontaut Biron, itself one of the most illustrious in the kingdom. Almost all the celebrities of that period, old marshals, worn out by the campaigns of the grand monarque, statesmen in the full flush of courtly favour, literary men of every grade, from the author of "Athalie" down to the writer of the latest lampoon, the loveliest women of the day, the professed wit, and the incipient poet, congregated in the salons, and formed the society of the Hotel de Biron.

A little girl was often to be seen there whose countenance, even at a very early age, gave token of that quickness of intelligence and depth of feeling which characterised her in after life. In the pensive expression of her eyes, and the general cast of her features, there was something of the charm which we associate with the name of Louise de la Vallière, and a resemblance to Carlo Dolci's Magdalen in the Gallery of Florence. If not the most beautiful, she was the most engaging of children. Tears were wont to stand in her dark blue eyes, to tremble on her long eye-lashes, when an heroic action was mentioned in her hearing. Those soul-stirring words, valour, fame and glory, had a magical influence on her young spirit.

It is as strange as it is true, that amongst women, it is usually the gentlest and the most loving who are the most enthusiastic about military prowess, the most easily dazzled by the pomp and circumstance of war, the readiest to sympathise, not with its victims but with its heroes,

the most influenced by the prestige which throws a veil over its horrors. A timid girl who shudders at the sight of a wound, weeps over a dying bird, and shrinks from destroying an insect, will listen with eager delight to tales of danger and of death, will read with flushed cheeks, and sparkling eyes, of armies swept away, or rivers running with blood; of batteries scaled in the face of a thousand foes; of one man standing alone where hundreds have perished around him. Her woman's spirit responds to the theme, it kindles at the thought, and the gentler the spirit, the quicker will be that sympathy. If, at the age when the soul awakens to new impressions, and the countenance reveals every feeling as it arises, five or six young girls were to be assembled together to witness some pageant of mimic warfare, to listen to the strains of martial music, or to the words of a poet when those words have become the battle-cry of a nation, which of them would be the first to undergo

that spell, and to breathe the deep-drawn sigh of suppressed emotion? Not the laughing girl who bends forward with eager gestures, not the stately beauty who coldly smiles and turns away, but she, the timid maiden who hides behind her companions, who shrinks from notice, who blushes when addressed; she it is who hangs on the lips from which flow the poet's words, who strains her eyes to catch the first sight of the banners floating in the wind, her ears to retain the faint sound of the warlike melody as it dies away in the distance.

Amongst the maids of honour of Madame Henriette d'Angleterre it would have been Louise de la Vallière, amongst the daughters of the Marquis de Biron the little Judithe. She was very tender-hearted, and full of compassion for the poor, this little Parisian maiden, but to an old soldier she would have gladly given the last coin in her purse, or, if that was empty, the ring off her finger.

The chivalrous virtues of her ancestors seemed to live again in this young descendant of the Crusaders ; the love of God and of the poor was blended in her heart with a childish enthusiasm for military glory. She was ever asking her nurse for stories out of the Bible, and especially for those that told how David conquered Goliath, how the valiant Macchabees defended their country, how the Archangel St. Michael drove Satan out of Heaven.

“To night, nurse,” she would say, “you must promise to tell me one of my cousin’s favorite stories?”

“If you behave yourself very well all day, Mademoiselle Judithe, we shall see about it to-night,” was Madame Dupuis’ customary reply.

One day Judithe enquired in return—

“Was my cousin then such a very good boy that you were always telling him stories?”

“Claude Alexandre a good boy ! O ! no

indeed, my dear ; there never was such a bold and troublesome young gentleman. He was enough to drive a poor woman out of her wits. I can see him now standing before me, just in the way he used to do, with his hands behind his back, and his dark eyes fixed upon me. ‘Now madame, my nurse,’ he would say, ‘please to tell me this very minute the story of the giant and the shepherd, or I will pull down the house about your ears ; but mind, that this time the giant must kill the shepherd ; I like giants much better than shepherds.’ And then he would go into a passion, and storm and stamp about the room, because, heaven forgive me, I would not alter the Scriptures just to suit his fancy. Ah, dear me, he was as handsome as an angel, but if any one thwarted him, there was the very devil to pay. No tutor could manage my young master, and indeed when M. de Seignelay tried to bully him, he found that he had caught a tartar.”

“Was that the father of Charles Colbert, who calls Marie his little wife?”¹

“Exactly so, my dear. The late Minister of the Admiralty. Your cousin had been wearing for two years the uniform of a naval officer, and was just turned twelve.² Well, one fine day my lord comes on board my young master’s ship in the harbour of Toulon, and proceeds to inspect the crew. When your cousin is presented to him, ‘Why, how now!’ exclaims my lord, ‘upon my honour you are not old enough or tall enough, my young gentleman, for his majesty’s service.’ ‘I am twelve years old,’ quoth the young

¹ Marie Renée de Gontaut, the sixth daughter of the Duc de Biron, married in 1726, Charles Colbert Comte de Seignelay, grandson of the great Colbert, and son of the Marquis de Seignelay, who was after his father Minister of the Admiralty under Lewis the Fourteenth.—*Dictionnaire de la Noblesse*.

² “His relative the Maréchal de Tourville, the Turrenne of the navy, made M. de Bonneval enter that profession at the early age of eleven.”—*Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne*.

count, drawing himself up to his full height. 'That will not do,' rejoins my lord. 'We shall be obliged to cashier you, my young friend.' 'That is impossible,' replies the boy. 'And why so?' says the minister. 'Because men of my name are never cashiered.' M. de Seignelay could not choose but laugh at this retort. 'Never mind, monsieur le comte,' he cried, 'the king breaks the midshipman, and makes M. de Bonneval a lieutenant.'¹

A fine stroke of fortune that for the young sailor! and mightily pleased, too, he was with his promotion. Aye! it was a goodly sight

¹ The Marquis de Seignelay, Minister of the Admiralty, as he was visiting the sea-ports in 1688, passed the midshipmen in review. He proposed to cashier the Comte de Bonneval, who was only twelve years old; the boy replied that a man of his name was never cashiered ("*ou ne casse pas uns homme de mon nom.*") The minister was so pleased with this answer that he said: "Never mind, Monsieur le Comte, the king breaks the midshipman, and makes M. de Bonneval a lieutenant." — *Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne.*

to see him, tossing his head back like a horse that sniffs the wind, and looking as if the ground was hardly good enough for him to tread upon. Ah! well-a-day, well-a-day! my poor eyes will never look upon his like again. I shall never see him storm or smile any more."

"Is my cousin dead, dear nurse, that you say such sad things? If he had died we should have put on our black dresses. Oh! I hope my cousin is not dead!"

"Better, perhaps, my sweet one, that he had died."

"Oh, what do you mean? Tell me what you mean, nurse."

"I mean that we might have wept over him then, without being obliged to conceal our tears. As it is we must take care never to mention his dear name."

"And why not mention his name?" persisted the little girl, looking up with wistful eyes into her nurse's face.

“Never mind, mademoiselle. It is no concern of yours. Come, take your doll, and amuse yourself, my dear.”

“It is so tiresome to amuse oneself,” said the child, with a sigh, and nestling up to Madame Dupuis, she threw her arms round her neck, and whispered, “Tell me why we must not mention my cousin’s name, and why was his picture taken out of my father’s room?”

“What! has it been removed from monsieur le marquis’s room? And what, then, has been done with my dear boy’s portrait?”

“I know where they have put it. I often go and look at my cousin’s picture. He has such beautiful eyes, and he stands so proudly by his charger. It is in the lumber-room, near the window. I get upon a stool, and wipe his face with my pocket-handkerchief; I will not have it spoiled with dust. I will not let the spiders cover it with their ugly cobwebs.”

“Well! I declare!” exclaimed Madame Dupuis. “And pray who has given you leave, mademoiselle, to go up alone into the lumber-room? I do not at all approve of it.”

“Come along with me, nurse, and I will show you my cousin’s picture. It will please you to see it.”

“No, indeed, my dear; I don’t choose that you should go poking about that old dusty lumber-room, and with your new silk dress on too!”

The little girl looked at her flowered petticoat and her lace sleeves, and said in a low voice:

“My new dress went there this morning, and is not one whit the worse for it.” Then, taking hold of Madame Dupuis’ hand, who always ended by yielding to her fancies, and sweet, harmless fancies they always were, she led her along several passages, and up two or three flights of stairs, till they reached the attic to which the portrait of the brave but

guilty Comte de Bonneval had been consigned by the outraged feelings of his indignant family. Out of breath with her rapid ascent, her cheeks flushed with excitement, lovely as one of Greuse's pictures, Judithe stood before that speaking canvass, which she had so often in secret stolen there to gaze at. The aged woman at her side, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, kept exclaiming, in broken accents :

“My boy ! my foster child ! my beautiful one !”

“I am sure he is not naughty,” whispered the little girl, with an appealing look at her nurse.

“They ought to have understood him better,” murmured Madame Dupuis. “They did not take into account his high spirit. He could never brook control, or submit to an insult.”

“If we had had to manage him, nurse, we should have done it much better. We should

have coaxed him, and kissed him, and begged of him to be good. Where is he now, my poor cousin?"

"God only knows! Since the day that monsieur le marquis said before us all, 'Let the Comte de Bonneval never be named in this house,' I have not ventured to ask any questions about him. Oh! that terrible news! It came upon me like a thunder-bolt, and then when I was told that in the Place de Grève, one terrible day—but, oh dear! what am I talking about; it is not fitting, my dear, that you should hear of such things. Come away, come away, Mademoiselle Judithe. I hardly know what I am saying. Ah! M. de Chamillart, you will have to answer for the soul of that dear boy."

The little girl turned pale, and said:

"What happened to my cousin? What did that wicked man do to him? Tell me all about it, nurse."

"Not to-day; not here, my dear; I could

not speak for crying. Some other time, perhaps, when we are sitting in the garden, on your favourite bench under the horse-chesnut-tree; but hark! there are your sisters calling you."

"Oh, let us go away, then. They are not to see this picture. Only you and I, nurse, are to come here," and turning once more to the portrait, little Judithe kissed her hand as if to take leave of it. The dark eyes of the picture seemed to follow the fair child, as with lingering footsteps she slowly withdrew.

It was true what old Madame Dupuis had hinted at. There had, indeed, been a sad and terrible day for those who loved the Comte de Bonneval; a day when his widowed mother had shed some of those tears which stamp on a woman's face what time cannot obliterate. Her idolised son had abandoned his country, and gone over to its enemies. His name was stigmatised as that of a traitor and a deserter. He was proclaimed as such on the

scaffold of the Place de Grêve, and in accordance with the usages of the time, hung in effigy by the hands of the executioner.¹

The Marquise de Bonneval was one of those persons in whom violent passions lie concealed under the appearance of a cold and haughty indifference. She shrunk from the pity of others even more than from the very sufferings which called it forth. On the evening of her son's simulated execution, she went as was her habit to the Hotel de Biron, and took her seat at the card-table, which was always made ready for her at one end of the drawing-room.

Her cousin the Marquis de Biron, his nephew, M. de Riom, and the lovely Marquise de Simiane, Madame de Sévigné's granddaughter, made up her party. Neither her countenance or her manner gave outward

¹ The King instituted proceedings against Bonneval and Langallerie, and both figured in effigy in the Place de Grêve.—*St. Simon's Mémoires*.

token of the storm which was raging within her breast, but every time that a new comer was announced, at every respectful salutation which was addressed to her, and in which she discerned, or fancied she discerned, the slightest shade of sympathy, or of compassion—to her more galling than the bitterest insult—the paleness of her cheeks became visible, even under the thick coating of rouge with which she had sought to disguise it. With the stoical courage of pride she went through that fiery ordeal, her hands busy with the cards, a smile on her parched lips, and the while from her heart a secret prayer arising, if that can be called a prayer, which was nothing less than a fierce appeal to Heaven for vengeance on those who had wrought her son's overthrow, an impassioned cry for retribution on the heads of those by whom she deemed he had been wronged. Heaven, in mercy, is often deaf to such prayers ; for, if in an evil hour for the suppliant, they reach the Eternal ears, the

answer falls back like a curse on the heart that has framed them.

When Madame de Simiane left the card-table, she seated herself on a sofa in one of the recesses of the window, and the Duc de St. Simon, who had been watching the game, or rather the players, with that keen curiosity which he has himself so well described, immediately hastened to her side, and entered into conversation with her. She pointed with an almost imperceptible motion of her fan towards the part of the room which she had left, and said to him in a low voice :

“Have you ever witnessed, my lord duke, a more remarkable display of insensibility, or a more striking example of courage. Which of the two shall we deem it to be?”

“Madame,” replied the duke, in his cold and formal manner, and with his somewhat malevolent smile, “I have never met with an instance of greater sensibility to grief and shame, and at the same time of a more obsti-

nate determination to hide that grief, and to brave that disgrace."

"Who could have ever foreseen such a catastrophe?" ejaculated Madame de Simiane, with an expressive gesture of her hand. "I am truly concerned for that unfortunate lady. She was so proud of her son, and in truth that poor Comte de Bonneval was as brave as a knight of old, and as witty as young Arouet. I assure you, my lord duke, that this event suggests to me a thousand melancholy reflections."

"I cannot choose but wonder, madame, and not without some indignation I confess, that women should be so apt to bestow their sympathy on persons whose characters so little deserve it."

"'Tis but natural to compassionate the misfortunes of others."

"And do you call that a *misfortune*, madame, which men have hitherto agreed upon to consider a *crime*?"

"He always expected that overtures of reconciliation would have been made to him.

And they should not have dealt so hardly with a man of his rank and of his spirit. Pride and poverty combined to hurry him to that fatal step.¹ Really, the ministers ought to show more consideration for persons of quality. Do you remember that neatly-turned sentence with which he ended his famous letter to M. de Chamillart: 'I shall offer my services to the Emperor, whose ministers *are* noblemen, and in consequence know how to behave *to* noblemen.'"²

¹ Poverty and wounded vanity led him to make his bargain with the Emperor.—*St. Simon's Memoirs*.

² My LORD,—I received the letter which you took the trouble to write to me, and where you tell me that I object to Civilians only because they are too accurate in their accounts. I must inform you in return that the great nobility of the kingdom willingly sacrifice their lives and their fortunes in his majesty's service, but that we are not bound to act in any way against our honour. If therefore I do not receive within three months a reasonable apology for the insult I have received from you, I shall enter the Emperor's service, where the ministers *are* all noblemen, and know how to behave *to* noblemen."—*Mémoires of the Prince de Ligne*.

“Aye, he had always a marvellous facility for giving an ingenious turn to a sentence—a ready tongue, indeed, and a smooth one to boot. He is one of those plausible criminals, one of those witty fools, who scare away the common sense of the public, and force an acquittal at the hands of virtue herself.”

“Indeed, my lord, you are mistaken in your suppositions. The world which you accuse is not half so indulgent as you imagine, and as to virtue herself! why Madame de Maintenon has been heard to say something severe of the poor count.”

“That wicked fairy!” ejaculated the duke.

“Hush! I pray you, my lord. Do not, I beseech you, be so violent, or you will drive me into the opposite camp. It is just because people speak so harshly of M. de Bonneval that I feel inclined to take his part, if it was only for the sake of contradicting them. I

get so weary of listening to the same phrases."

"Alas! madame. At Athens you would have voted, I see, for the banishment of Aristides!"

"Have you taken that Grecian worthy for your model, my lord? Methinks you have misgivings lest we poor Parisians should weary of your virtues, but, my dear lord, be not afraid, I, for one, will stand up for you, and protest that I have known you sometimes to be extremely unjust."

"How so, madame la marquise?"

"Why, for instance, when you complained just now of my compassion for a poor exile."

"Compassion is often a dangerous stumbling-block; it stands in the way of justice and truth, and fosters a morbid sensibility that tends to obliterate the landmarks between virtue and vice."

"M. de Bonneval is said to be in great

favour with Prince Eugene,¹ who has, I have been informed, a very high opinion of his talents.”

“He was always reckoned a man of parts ;² but the versatility of his genius serves only

¹ His (Bonneval's) talents had made him a great favourite with Prince Eugene. He was lodged in his palace at Vienna, and did the honours of it. His expences all paid by his host. He became a lieutenant-general in the Emperor's army.—*St Simon's Memoirs*.

² The Comte de Bonneval was much given to reading. He was well acquainted with the best classical authors, and by means of a prodigiously good memory he had acquired a thorough knowledge of history. If he had had a little more moderation he might have been a great man in almost every line.—*Mémoire of the Prince de Ligne*.

The Chevalier de Bonneval was a younger son of very good family, with great talents for war, and a remarkable gift of eloquence. He was full of wit and cleverness, his mind was well stored with reading ; he had a pleasing manner of expressing himself ; something graceful and ingenious in his turn of thought ; at the same time he was extravagant, profligate, an unbeliever, a man without honour or conscience.—*St. Simon's Memoirs*.

to bewilder him, and his prodigious quickness discovers to him so many openings that he easily loses his way."

"Can it be possible to get over such a calamity?" Madame de Simiane said, glancing at the same time at the Marquise de Bonneval, who had left the card-table, and was conversing with Madame d'Urfé, one of M. de Biron's sisters.

"By degrees," the duke replied, "a person becomes accustomed to the irreparable side of such a catastrophe, its accompanying disgrace, and labours to remedy that which is remediable, the temporal disadvantages that attend it. I am much mistaken if an indomitable resolution to overcome fortune does not lie at the bottom of that apparent indifference. When, to a person endowed with a strong will, there still remains something to do and something to hope for, her misery is not overwhelming."

“Alas!” exclaimed Madame de Simiane, “it is not invariably the greatest misfortunes that cause the greatest amount of suffering. I agree with you there, my lord duke. Everything that I see going on around me, serves to confirm my distaste for the world. How fortunate are those hare-hunting, simple-minded country gentlemen, who have no ambition beyond the bounds of their little *squirearchies*, and who live amongst people who may be a little rough and unpolished sometimes, but who speak the truth, and are honest in their friendships,”¹

“What has awakened in you, madame, this misanthropical spirit? I have never known anyone who had less reason for indulging it, surrounded as you are by so many persons who love and esteem you.”

“Ah! my lord, there are in the world so many affectionate persons without affection!

¹ From *Madame de Simiane's Letters*.

so many professors of virtue without virtue ! and then, as you were saying just now, so many charming persons that we must not be charmed with, that it puts one out of conceit with humanity. Depend upon it, my lord, the world and its spirit are far more dangerous guides than that compassionate disposition which you so severely condemned just now. It may lead us to the brink of a precipice, but it does not drive us over it as the world too often does."

"The world and its followers know what they are about, madame la marquise, whereas compassion, like love, wears a bandage over its eyes," replied the duke, with a smile. "The errors which spring from a good heart are the most difficult to cure."

"Your wisdom is so severe, my lord, that my folly quails before it. I am often so afraid of opposing my nonsense to your sense, that, like cowards who play the

bully, I provoke you to a quarrel just for the sake of bringing the argument to a conclusion. Do pray be a little angry with me, or I shall have to own myself defeated."

As she said these words, Madame de Simiane gave him one of those incomparable smiles, which she had inherited from her grandmother, and which made her so irresistibly attractive. The duke bowed low and answered :

"There are very few people, madame la marquise, who would not obtain that favour from me more easily than yourself. Do think of something else wherein I may oblige you without so much belying my inclinations.

"Well, then, my lord duke, I have a few friends to dinner on Thursday next. May I hope that you will give them and me the pleasure of your company?"

The duke bowed assent, and Madame de Simiane joined a group of ladies who were conversing with that brilliant vivacity for which the Parisian society of that day was so eminently conspicuous.

Second Chapter.

"**THERE** is a public mischief in your mirth,
It plagues your country ; folly such as your's
Has made, which enemies could ne'er have done,
An arch of empire, steadfast but for you,
A mutilated structure soon to fall."—COWPER.

"*He* has been cunning in his overthrow,
The careful pilot of his proper woe.

* * * * *

His whole life was a contest since the day
That gave *him* being, gave *him* that which marred
The gift, a fate, *a will* that walked astray."—BYRON.

A REAL talent for conversation is becoming every day more rare. Few are to be found in our time who excel in that line. To most of us it is easier to write. We can take up a pen, and with an aching heart or a weary spirit pour forth upon paper feelings and

thoughts which are struggling for utterance, and which can be better imparted to that mute and irresponsible auditor "the reader" than to the cold or hostile listeners who so often surround us. This silent intercourse with the minds of others, this secret sympathy with unknown friends is precisely what we require in an age where questions of the deepest interest are continually mooted around us, where, for those who are in earnest, nothing can be indifferent that touches, however remotely or accidentally, on the faith, the welfare, and the destinies of mankind, where theories are speedily converted into systems, and new ideas quickly assume the importance of events; where religion and science, politics and arts are linked together by so many ties, that a subject of apparently trifling import turns easily into a matter of the most intense interest. Under the self-same sky, breathing the self-same air, nurtured by the very same soil, not seldom

under the same roof, wishes are formed, fears excited, and hopes awakened, which we often dare not impart even to those we love best, but which cross the ocean stamped on the page that receives our passing thoughts, or rise to Heaven on the wings of silent prayer.

The time is gone by when matters of opinion only furnished food for conversation, when men used words, as a fencing-master does his sword, simply to display their dexterity and skill. As well might the hand of man attempt by its unaided strength to arrest the course of an express-train, or to catch hold of the spark that flies along the electric-wire. "My dear aunt, in this country everything is turned into a jest," was the remark that the young Duchesse de Bourgogne addressed to Madame de Maintenon. This is not the case in our days. We do not hide our faith in the secret recesses of our hearts; and thrust God out of sight. We have learnt not to smile at the scoffs of impiety. The conflict

is engaged, and the combatants are in earnest, but on the side of religion, the forces are too much scattered, the watchword overlooked. We hardly recognise our friends from our foes, when the sufferings and the struggles of mankind are calling upon us to act, "to be heroes in the fight."

Then it is easier to write than to speak. Somebody may hear, somebody may accept what is addressed to none in particular. Men do not resist appeals which have no authority but that which they themselves choose to assign to them, which chance alone has brought before their eyes, and which they are at full liberty to reject, that is, if a secret voice does not whisper in their ear what was said by one of the cleverest women of our own day, that though each man has a right to follow in the journey of life a track of his own choosing, none should insist on forcing it upon others as the high road.

The period we are considering, that is, the

end of Louis the Fourteenth's reign, and the minority of his' successor was about the most brilliant era of conversation in France. The stirring interests of political existence, or of literary achievements, were restricted to a chosen few.

“ And wit, that sprite
Whose quivers bright
A thousand arrows squandered,”

and whose native soil, if, indeed, he owns any such special allegiance, is surely that of France, had to seek a vent for its effervescence in those conversational arenas where the art of talking well, “*le bien dire*,” as the Duc de St. Simon expresses it, was carried to a perfection never reached before or since. The sap was working its way through the worn-out stem; the new wine of free discussion was about to burst the old bottles of conventional forms. The dawn of that so-called philosophy which was so soon to upset the whole fabric of society, was breaking upon the world. It

bred a sort of intellectual recklessness, which handled every subject with audacious levity, and measured with its gauge what had hitherto been gazed at from a respectful distance.

Safe behind the ramparts which the faith of other days had erected about them, men cared not how they loosened the foundations on which they rested. In Madame de Lambert's *salon*, for instance, it was reckoned in better taste to speak of virtue than of faith; of the Supreme Being than of Almighty God. Rousseau was forestalled by the admirers of Fénelon, and St. François de Sales was gone quite out of fashion.

Madame de Lambert's counsels to her son were, no doubt, very improving, but not altogether in the spirit of that pithy sentence which Blanche of Castille addressed to the royal saint of France: "My child, I would rather see you die than commit a mortal sin."

The weapons which had been used in the cause of religion were too richly adorned. The ornaments of the scabbard had injured the metal within. Careless of that faith which had hitherto been their safeguard, men gazed upon the billows and waxed giddy as they gazed. Feebler and feebler grew that guiding light, and when at last the storm arose, when the winds blew, and the rain fell, it flickered in the socket, it threatened to expire. But—

“Though doomed to death, ’twas fated not to die.”

Bright and beautiful like the beacon in the night, resplendent as the star that shines through the dark clouds, it rose again triumphant amidst the desolating tempest, raised its standard once more, and stood the connecting-link between the ancient glories and the new destinies of France.

Conversation such as has been described was going on with unflagging animation amongst the *habitués* of the Hotel de Biron on the night

of M. de Bonneval's exhibition in effigy "*en Place de Grève*." With incomparable felicity of expression, neatness of language, and humourous turn of thought were discussed in rapid succession, the latest news from the seat of war, the gossip of the court, the banishment of a minister, the success of a tragedy, a recently-discovered intrigue, or an edifying conversion. The sayings of Mesdames de Coulange and de Cornuel were quoted and applauded. The witty remark of one speaker elicited a brilliant repartee from another; a skirmishing warfare of words was carried on with that exquisite grace of manner which softens the edge of a dispute, and to which the French language, with its wonderful pliability, so perfectly adapts itself.

In the recess of a window, at the furthest end of the room, several men were engaged in discussing the strange ceremony that had taken place that morning at the Place de Grève. There were those amongst them who

had been personal friends of Messieurs de Bonneval and Langallerie, and yet who scrupled not to turn into a jest, and describe in playful terms, the painful exhibition they had that day witnessed. None but the near relations of the outlawed gentlemen seemed to think the occasion too serious for a witticism, or too sad for a sneer. Many a *bon mot* was uttered that day, many a jest was put forth, which travelled from Paris to Versailles, and from Versailles to the various courts of Europe by means of those illegibly-written, incorrectly-spelt, but incomparably agreeable letters, which were wont to catch on the wing, and to disseminate abroad, the sparkling emanations of Parisian wit and levity.

It was reported at the time that M. de Bonneval was in the habit of entertaining Prince Eugene with the witticisms which his desertion had given rise to in Paris. The great general was right royally amused at

these jests, but it was said that on one occasion, when he happened to be in a sarcastic mood, he had been heard to answer :

“ If French people think it glorious to defend their fatherland, they also seem to consider it vastly entertaining to betray it.”

From the moment of her son's trial, Madame de Bonneval applied herself anxiously to watch each fluctuating shade of opinion in regard to him, and to detect in the judgments passed upon his conduct the delicate line of distinction that separates blame from contempt.

Since the day of his birth her exiled son had been the idol of her heart. An impassioned affection, even when directed in a legitimate channel, is often a dangerous tyrant, apt to exact costly and sometimes unhallowed sacrifices. Love can be, in certain cases, more merciless than hatred. If virtue and religion do not stand as restraining angels by its side, it will offer up the peace, the happiness, nay, the lives of others, at the

feet of that divinity for which it has built up a throne, and idolatrously bowed down to worship. There is an astonishing power in singleness of purpose. "One faith, one lord, one baptism," St. Paul exclaimed of yore, and the strength of Christianity was in those words. If a man can take himself to witness that in his heart there is but one desire, and in his life but one object, he can almost make sure that that object will be attained. The Marquise de Bonneval *had* that confidence in herself, and in her own singleness of purpose. She never for an instant faltered in her efforts, or ceased to have faith in her ultimate success. In the same spirit, she made it her study to harden her heart, in order to brace it for the task which she never for a single instant lost sight of.

Her son's successful career had been the subject of her solicitude at all times, and not less after his disgrace than when his prospects in life were most promising. Praise, homage,

and distinction were to be his at any price, and in the very depths of her humiliation she consoled herself with visions of eventual triumph and revenge. To crush his enemies, and tread them under foot, was the aim towards which every power of her soul was directed, with a tenacity of purpose conscious of its own strength, and having no misgivings as to the result.

Claude de Bonneval was thirty-two years of age when he deserted. Up to that time, the love, the hopes, the fears of that proud and sensitive woman had kept pace, as it were, with his adventurous career. From his very childhood he had been at strife with every species of authority, and always set at defiance every attempt to control him; and at the same time by the charm of his manners and the brilliancy of his talents he had often succeeded in fascinating the very persons he had most offended. As a boy he had been remarkable for his courage, his daring insub-

ordination towards his superiors, and his unbounded generosity to his inferiors. He would have risked his life twenty times over to save that of a comrade, but at the slightest provocation, and with the same indifference, would have called him out, and run his sword through his body. Always at the breach, always in fancy or reality leading a forlorn hope, his successes, reverses, triumphs, and misfortunes succeeded each other with such bewildering rapidity, that the eye was strained to follow the various phases of his life.

His mother's moments of joy were so brief that she had scarcely time to relish their sweetness. As a man running a race can only just snatch at the cup which is proffered to him, so her fevered thirst for happiness could never wholly assuage itself. Especially since the outset of the War of Succession she had been perpetually haunted by apprehensions of approaching calamities. The praises of her son's

valour and ability which reached her from every side, were only gleams of sunshine flashing across a darkening sky. Her pride in the present and her fears for the future were alike buried in the deepest recesses of her heart.

Until the fatal moment that he deserted, there had been something brilliant and even chivalrous in M. de Bonneval's very failings. At twelve years old an audacious repartee had won for him the good graces of M. de Seignelay, the able minister of Louis the Fourteenth, and secured his promotion. At an age when the generality of boys are still playing at being soldiers, the young count had already distinguished himself in various engagements, and was treading fast in the footsteps of his relative M. de Tourville, when a superior officer happened to offend the fiery lieutenant by treating him as a youth bound to respect his authority, and straightway the indignant subaltern challenged the Count de

Beaumont, and wounded him in the arm. Compelled in consequence to give up his profession,¹ he complied with that necessity with more exultation at the occasion of his retirement than regret at having provoked it.

He then entered the French Guards, and at Paris and at Versailles, at the court and in the camp, he continued to make himself generally popular, and to display his wonted aptitude for making friends and enemies. He passed through that period of life, when the character and reputation of a man assume

¹ The Comte de Beaumont, a naval lieutenant, chose to treat Bonneval as a child. He found out his mistake. The child was hot tempered, called him out, and wounded him in three places. He did not die of these wounds, and the affair was hushed up, but the relatives of this M. de Beaumont were stupid enough to resent it, and as they were very intimate with M. de Pontchartrain, then Secretary of State for the Navy, Bonneval saw that he would not have a fair chance in that career. He bought, in 1698, a commission in the French Guards."—*Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne*.

a definite position, with the same careless indifference for consequences, the same reckless defiance of everything like opinion or authority, which had always characterised him. His rare personal advantages, the singular beauty of his features, his commanding stature, symmetrical figure, and prodigious strength, which made Jean Baptiste Rousseau bestow upon him the epithet of "Modern Hercules," joined to his wit and talents, and to that sort of good nature, which is not unfrequently allied with a total absence of principle, had inspired him with such a confidence in his powers of captivation, that he blindly trusted to their influence. By a smile, a jest, a playful confession of his own waywardness, a few affectionate words, or a witty repartee, he always reckoned upon making his way out of every difficulty. Few could withstand the power of that fascination. Some of the most respectable men, and of the most virtuous

women in Paris, had to reproach themselves with an involuntary partiality for the most attractive *mauvais sujet* in the world; one of whom it was often said, with an indulgent smile :

“He is certainly very wild, but he has such a good heart !”¹

Alas ! how many hearts have been broken, how many destinies blighted, how much affection trodden under foot by *good hearts* of this fatal description ! by men who know how to combine the charm of sensibility with the most degrading vices and the most withering selfishness !

During the campaigns of Italy clouds began to gather around the path of the Comte de

¹ The Comte de Bonneval had more heart than prudence. In his style of writing it is easy to recognise a man full of feeling, of wit, of fire, at bottom a really good-hearted fellow, with a very keen sense of honour. It was impossible not to love Bonneval.”—*Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne*.

Bonneval. Complaints were heard on various sides of his mal-administration of the provinces committed to his military government, and stories were continually circulated to his discredit. At last a serious accusation was produced against him, and neither his high birth nor his powerful connections, nor the protection of his patron, the Duc de Vendôme, nor even his previous services were sufficient to suppress it.

M. de Louvois had no indulgence for a turbulent and haughty nobility, and M. de Chamillart, though a *roturier*, had the insolence to insist on a nobleman's rendering an account of the public money. The most heroic valour, the most brilliant wit, the most attractive manners, were powerless in a question of pounds shillings and pence, and the descendant of Charlemagne was summoned to disprove the charge of having levied irregular contributions in the conquered districts, and

illegally appropriated them to his own use.¹

In vain Bonneval displayed all the resources of his genius, overwhelmed the prosaic Chamillart with his rounded sentences, and endeavoured to wound him with the sharpest arrows of his satire. The minister held his ground, and the keen-sighted Marquise de Bonneval trembled for the result. Her hatred of Chamillart was all the more intense, because at the bottom of her heart something whispered to her that he was right, that not the king alone, but justice also was on his side in this conflict with the worthy scion of the nobility of the League and of the Fronde. Clear-sightedness is often the greatest of sufferings, especially when it

¹ Bonneval had roughly used those little Italian Princes, whom, without any good reason, we were bent on sparing. He had drawn from them a great deal of money. The remonstrances of these princes and of the treasurers brought upon him letters from Chamillart, who insisted on his disgorging his gains.—

St. Simon's Memoirs.

does not serve to guide a person's conduct, but only to point their fears. When the unhappy mother read the letter in which her son threatened to desert, a deadly faintness came over her. It was what she had most feared, and long expected! In vain she had written, remonstrated, entreated. She threatened to curse a son who could abandon his country's service, and then with all the waywardness of passionate affection, on the very day when the news reached her that the fatal act was accomplished, it was on his enemies, and not on him, that she called down the vengeance of Heaven. From that moment, as has been already said, she had but one end in view, the return of her son, not as a pardoned criminal, but as the object of universal admiration and envy. She laboured at it by day, she dreamt of it by night. She was doomed to accomplish it at last. There is an awful chapter in the book of Heaven's decrees. It records the self-willed wishes

which have met with their fulfilment, and upon many of its pages are inscribed those impressive words of Scripture: "Thou hast sown the whirlwind, and shalt reap the storm."

Third Chapter.

"I BLESS thee, vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart,
God shield thee to thy latest years!"—WORDSWORTH.

"As dissolute, as desperate; yet though both
I see some sparkles of a better hope
Which older days, may happily bring forth."
SHAKESPEARE.

It is often interesting to examine into the origin of certain sympathies, certain friendships, which are observed to exist between persons whose principles, characters, and tastes are strikingly dissimilar. It can generally be traced to a secret coincidence of feeling on one particular point, which serves as a connecting-link between two opposite

natures, and influences the destiny of both. The Marquise de Bonneval was not fond of children, and had never taken any notice of the daughters of her cousin, M. de Biron. Night after night she used to see them seated round a table at one end of their mother's drawing-room, occupied with some fancy-work, and pursuing their labours with the downcast eyes and demure deportment which were considered essential to the manners of young ladies under the ancient *régime*, and which in many cases did not preclude a very premature knowledge of the world and of its ways. When the clock struck the appointed hour they used to rise in silence and relinquish their work, made a profound curtsy to their mother and to the assembled company, and retired, accompanied by their governesses.

On one of these occasions Madame de Bonneval, engrossed by her own thoughts, and heedless of the conversation around her, accidentally

happened to fix her eyes on the little Judithe, the third of these young girls. Something in the child's countenance awakened her attention, and she watched her for a few moments with a certain degree of interest. This circumstance would have probably led to no results had it not been for an incident which took place a few days afterwards, and which left an indelible impression upon her mind. She was sitting one evening by Madame de Biron's side, when the door was thrown open, and M. de Chamillart was announced.¹

¹ Chamillart was a good and honest man, with perfectly clean hands and the best intentions. Civil, patient, obliging; a good friend, and a moderate enemy; attached to the State, but still more to the King. He had a very limited understanding, and, like most stupid people, was very obstinate; he laughed with a gentle compassion at those who tried to argue with him, and was totally unable to understand reason. He had no ability at all, and thought himself equal to everything, and this was the more hopeless that it was in consequence of the position in which he was placed, so that it was owing rather to folly than to presumption, for he had no vanity.—*St. Simon's Memoirs.*

It was the first time that she had seen the minister since her son's disgrace, and a deadly paleness spread over her face, as she caught sight of him. She rose from the sofa, and hurried to the other end of the room, where the children were sitting. Sinking down on a chair which one of the governesses placed for her, and taking a piece of embroidery in her hand, she seemed to examine it attentively.

The voice of the man she hated was sounding in her ears, and caused her the most painful sensations. In a few minutes he came up to the children's table, without noticing her presence. A folding-screen partly concealed her, and her head was bent down over the work she held in her hands. He addressed a few playful words to the children, and Marguerite and Françoise, the two eldest, answered him in the same tone.

“And you, Mademoiselle Judithe,” he continued, turning to the youngest, “will you not allow me to kiss your hand?”

One of the governesses whispered :

“ Make a curtsey, mademoiselle, and give your hand to his lordship.”

The little girl turned as red as a pomegranate, and shook her head without speaking.

“ Don’t be shy, you foolish little thing,” said her eldest sister, and taking hold of her hand, she tried to put it into M. de Chamillart’s. Judithe pulled it violently away, and burst into tears.

“ What is the matter with you, my dear,” exclaimed at the same moment the governesses and the sisters.

“ I hate him,” said the little girl ; and they all laughed, all but the Marquise de Bonneval. *She* did not laugh, but catching up the child in her arms, she carried her into another room, clasped her to her breast, and whispered in her ear :

“ And how came you to hate him, Judithe ?”

“Because my nurse has told me, madame, that he is a wicked man who sent away from us my cousin whom we love so dearly.”

These simple words fell like balm on the sore and bruised heart of that proud sufferer. The dull cold stone in her bosom seemed for a moment to melt, and overwhelming the child with kisses and with blessings, she kept murmuring in broken, hesitating accents, and with the deepest emotion words such as these :

“God reward thee, my blessed little angel. My sweet bird of peace. Thy heart has already taught thee what thy understanding cannot as yet fathom. Judithe, my fair child, the future is no longer without a ray to enlighten its gloom.”

The little girl could not guess at the feelings which dictated these rapidly-uttered and impassioned exclamations, but she could sympathise with the sorrow which found vent in

these outpourings. Throwing her arms round Madame de Bonneval's neck, she said :

“ You are very unhappy. I will ask God to comfort you.”

“ I seek but one blessing, my child, I ask but one favour at His hands. There is but one supplication with which I weary the Eternal ears. Let your innocent prayers obtain for me that boon. Pray that my son may return and triumph over his enemies.”

The little girl was fetched away to bed, and sorrowfully withdrew. When she was ending her prayers that night she asked leave to say an additional “ Our Father ” and “ Hail, Mary.”

Madame Dupuis begged to know for what object, upon which she said :

“ To ask Almighty God to bring my cousin home again, and to punish the wicked men who sent him away.”

“My dear,” replied her nurse, “we must never pray that anyone may be punished. Do you not recollect that the Gospel teaches us to pray for our enemies?”

“So it does,” answered Judithe, with a look of deep thought in her innocent eyes; and the next day, and the next, and for a long time afterwards, she never failed at the end of her prayers for her parents, her brothers, and her sisters to add, “and please God also bless M. de Chamillart my enemy.”

From that time forward Madame de Bonneval never ceased to take an interest in the child that had learnt to love her son and to dislike his enemies. She often requested Madame de Biron to permit her daughter to spend whole days at her house; and, in the society of this little girl, she found an unlooked-for consolation. Her character, as she advanced in years, did not belie the promise of her childhood. Nothing could be more attractive or more amiable

than her disposition. It was marked by an absence of all selfishness, and a calm, concentrated enthusiasm which showed itself less in words than by an intensity of feeling, and a tenacity of purpose, peculiar in one so gentle and refined.

In the world, or even to her friends, Madame de Bonneval scarcely ever spoke of her son, but when alone with Judithe, the passion of her grief broke through the stern reserve of her nature. She would pour forth her sorrows in the ear of her young companion, who, out of the depths of her pure heart, gave back the rich boon of a fervent and genuine sympathy, in return for the troubled outpourings of that blighted, suffering, and unsubdued spirit.

Judithe's sisters were as different as possible from herself. Before they had grown out of childhood, their minds had been engrossed by the anticipation, at least, if not by the actual enjoyment of the pleasures of the world.

The natural levity of their dispositions, joined to the worldliness of the society they lived in, inspired them with indifference for everything but dress and amusement.

In order to rise above the atmosphere of frivolity which pervades society at certain epochs, it is in general necessary to be either very religious or very intellectual. Common-place characters and common-place minds follow the course of the stream, and it requires no ordinary amount of merit and distinction successfully to stem the current. The elder daughters of the Marquise de Biron did not dream of any such opposition to the prevailing spirit of the times. But there are natures which the world seems unable to lay hold of. It knows not how to deal with them, nor do they seem to understand how to deal with it. Like the children in the fiery-furnace, they pass unscathed by its withering breath. Judithe, who at seven years old, had delighted in tales of chivalry, and stories of martyrs, at fifteen was

devoted to books, and particularly to poetry. She sought in the writings of men of genius that food of the soul which nothing in the world she lived in seemed capable of affording. She was, even then, somewhat of a stranger in her own family. Such as her life was to be, so was her early youth ; solitary, silent, full of deep musings and communings with her own heart. She was day by day nursing a fancy which was one day to grow into a passion. Weary of the world's noise ever sounding in her ears, she retired into herself to listen for voices from an imaginary world. Always hearing of titles, of pensions, of places and of benefices, she sat dreaming in silence of glory and of heroism, of virtue and of greatness. The men and the women of her time were very unlike those she read of in her beloved books, and the Marquise de Bonneval, with her deep-seated grief, her outward coldness, and her impassioned feelings was a far more interesting personage in her eyes than the

courtiers and fine ladies who turned everything into ridicule ; even the very objects for which they strove with such feverish activity.

The confidence reposed in her by a person whom in her childhood she had at one time looked upon with awe and something of fear, as a being far too stern to bestow or to inspire affection, excited in her the liveliest gratitude, and deeply touched her heart. It was a source of intense interest to a young and inexperienced girl to witness, and in a certain sense to share, the struggles, the agitations, the emotions which were concealed under that smooth and frozen surface ; to *know* what the rest of the world did not even suspect. Madame de Bonneval used to impart to her some of those circumstances in her past life which had given a color and a direction to her whole existence, and described and analysed the feelings which had accompanied those vicissitudes.

Married at the age of fifteen to a man

much older than herself, and whom she could neither love nor esteem, she had secretly repined at her fate ; but a mixture of pride and timidity had always prevented her from seeking in the society of others unlawful distractions on the one hand, or on the other such innocent friendships and interests as in a certain measure supply the want of domestic happiness.

Her first child seemed to bear the stamp of the profound ennui which had attended the first years of her married life. Plain in person, and inferior in understanding, he had been from his birth an object of indifference, if not of aversion to his mother ; but when Claude Alexandre was born, then she had learnt for the first time what a passion maternal love can become, how on one object can be concentrated feelings which till that moment may have slumbered unawakened in a human heart.

“ Oh, my dear Judithe,” she one day ex-

claimed, "if I am not much mistaken, the time may come when you will know by experience the joy and the torment of an engrossing affection; you will then understand how one single feeling can take possession of the heart, and become the main-spring of our existence."

"Indeed," Judithe replied, "I can scarcely conceive a stronger attachment than mine for my father. Since his return from his last campaign especially, I cannot describe the affection that I feel for him. When I think of the loss of his arm it affects me so deeply that I can hardly restrain my tears. The very name of Landau fills me with emotion.¹ The other day I stole gently to his side, and pressed my lips on his shoulder. He smiled and said to my mother, 'This child has such a fancy for shattered limbs, that we must make haste and marry her to some old invalided maréchal.'"

¹ The Marquis de Biron was severely wounded in the arm, in mounting the trench at the Siege of Landau, on the 2nd of July, 1713.—*Dictionnaire de la Noblesse.*

“Ah! they are looking out for a husband for you, my love.”

“Oh, no, indeed, madame la marquise. It is my sister Françoise¹ who is going to marry M. de Bonac,² the nephew of our dear M. de Bonrepos.”³

¹ Françoise Madeleine de Gontaut married the Marquis de Bonac, a diplomate.—*Dictionnaire de la Noblesse.*

² Biron, who had but little fortune and a great number of children, managed to dispose of his eldest daughter by marrying her to Bonac, the nephew of Bonrepos, with a portion of only 6000 francs.—*St. Simon's Memoirs.*

³ Bonrepos was never married. He was a long time in the Admiralty-office under Colbert and Seignelay. After the death of the latter, he resigned his place. It had served to gain him friends at Court, and admission into the best and highest society. The King treated him with kindness, and Madame de Maintenon also. He was much esteemed, and on a footing of great consideration in the world. He was honourable, upright, and not without talent. Bonac, Biron's son-in-law, was the heir of Bonrepos, who had a pension of 30,000 livres from the king, whereas Biron had no portions to give to his daughters.—*St. Simon's Memoirs.*

“You would not have been sorry to have married him yourself, I suppose. Few young ladies would object to being called, ‘Madame l’Ambassadrice.’”

“Oh, for my part I have always wished to marry a hero, or to become a nun.”

“A hero! what sort of a hero do you mean?”

“One like Bayard or Duguesclin. One whose praise is in every mouth, whose name is famous all over the world; whose sword none can withstand. I cannot imagine anything more enchanting than to be the wife of such a man. To be proud of him she loves! What a charming destiny for a woman. It does not often fall to her lot, but I own that I should not willingly renounce all hope of so brilliant a fate.”

“You are a very extraordinary girl, my dear Judithe. Instead of the hero you describe I have little doubt that you will be married to some dignitary of the law, some

parliamentary counsellor perhaps, or else some hanger-on of the Court, whose campaigns are made at Versailles, and who besieges the King's ante-room with more zeal than the frontier towns."

"I do not care, madame, to be married at all, and I am certain that my father would permit me to take the veil if I wished it, instead of my sister Marguerite, who does not feel much inclination for the religious life."

"Judithe, I have heard this morning from my son. Can you understand that his letters are at once the only consolation, and the greatest torment of my life. I suffer at being parted from him, I live in continual fear of some new catastrophe; he refuses to listen to my suggestions, he is always causing me some fresh anxiety or some fresh disappointment. In fine, the sight of his handwriting throws me into the strangest agitations."

"Whether I quite understand your feelings

or not, dearest lady," Judithe replied, "I know that I feel for you from the bottom of my heart;" and she laid her soft little hand on the dry and burning one of her agitated companion, who, after a moment's pause, continued:

"He has been fighting a duel with a Frenchman who did not approve of his assuring my Lord Stafford that His Majesty Louis le Grand aims at universal dominion, and only a fortnight ago he challenged a Prussian officer who had ventured to assert it.¹ There never was such a fiery, restless nature. As well might one sit down to rest on the summit of Vesuvius when an irruption is hourly ex-

¹ It was at the time of the Peace of Utrecht that the Comte de Bonneval declared to Lord Stafford that Lewis the Fourteenth aspired to universal dominion, and that he fought with a Frenchman who contradicted his assertion. Some days afterwards he challenged a Prussian General who had said the same thing, and who spoke disrespectfully of that King.—*Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne.*

pected, as hope for a moment's tranquillity when one loves the Comte de Bonneval. He is at once the pride, the joy, and the curse of my life!"

Judithe took the marquise's hand within her own, and said in a soothing manner:

"Do not say anything against him, dear lady. A few hours hence you would wish the words unsaid. Oh, how I heard him praised last night at my Aunt d'Urfé's."

"You heard him praised Judithe? Make haste and tell me who praised my son. Let me know the name of the person who set at defiance the stupid prejudices of national pride, and dared to praise the man whose arm France has learned to fear."

"It was M. de Rothelin, who, when my cousin was mentioned, exclaimed: 'What a fine generous nature that man has shown himself possessed of! I vow that I have never met with one more noble-hearted. When I was so severely wounded that my best friend would

scarcely have recognised me, the Comte de Bonneval came to my assistance, and carried me off on his shoulders to his own tent. If I had been his brother he could not have tended me with more tenderness and care ;'¹ and then he went on to tell us of all the goodness my cousin had shown to the French prisoners, especially to the sick and the wounded. Do you know, madame, that M. de Cambray has written to him repeatedly to thank him for his kindness to the Chevalier de Fénélon.² Such thanks are worth having,

¹ At the Siege of Aire, the Marquis de Rothelin, both of whose legs had been broken, and who was taken prisoner, owed in a great measure his recovery to the devoted care of his friend the Comte de Bonneval, who received him into his house. He likewise gave hospitality to the Chevalier de Fénélon, to whom he was related, and to many other French prisoners of distinction.—*Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne*.

² It was during these campaigns that Bonneval had the honour of corresponding with Fénélon, whose nephew had been made prisoner. There existed not

worth deserving. There is something very grand in that way of requiting the injuries he has received. It is indeed heaping coals of fire on the heads of his enemies. Let them slander him as much as they please. Such actions speak for themselves."

"There is no end to their slanders. They are always inventing new calumnies against him. His brother, his own brother—"

Madame de Bonneval paused a few seconds, and then went on in an agitated manner.

"Yes, you shall hear of a sad instance of the power of prejudice and envy, of the way in which they distort the feelings of those who yield to their influence. You shall know what I have had to suffer through my two sons; through the recklessness of the one and

less than fifty letters from the Archbishop of Cambray to the Comte de Bonneval. They were only destroyed at the time of the Revolution.—*M. Sainte Beuve's Causeries Littéraires.*

the meanness of the other. Listen to me, my dear child. To you alone can I disclose the anguish I endure when I think of the scene that took place at the battle of the lines at Turin. Picture to yourself for a moment the fierce encounter of the two armies; the wild confusion of the *mêlée*, the clash of arms, the cries of the combatants; and then call to mind the dreadful fact that two brothers, the two sons of the unhappy mother who is speaking to you, were fighting there that day, on opposite sides.¹ The eldest—you

¹ The Comte de Bonneval had attained the rank of Major-General at the time of the attack of the lines of Turin. The Marquis de Bonneval, the elder brother of the count, was taken in that battle. An old officer who was present at it, and who gave me the account of it when I was very young, told me that the Marquis was on the point of being cut down by the Hungarian Grenadiers, who were then called Heyducks, when our Bonneval arrived just in time to save him. In the correspondence that took place several years after between the brothers it will be seen that this circumstance is alluded to.—*Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne*.

have seen him I believe?—a being deficient in strength of body and of mind, a poor creature in the full sense of the term, found himself at one moment surrounded by a troop of Germans, who pointed their bayonets at his breast. Death stared him in the face, and he gave himself up for lost; when all of a sudden a victorious sword flashed before his eyes, a well-known voice resounded in his ears; and the weapons of his enemies were turned away from his bosom. Did he hail his deliverer? Did he welcome his brother, who had rushed to his rescue? No, he faltered out in trembling accents, ‘Save me from my brother. My brother wants to kill me.’ He said it then, he has said it since, he will say it to his dying day.¹ How can

¹ I have remarked in the fourth article of the letter which you have done me the honour to write to me, a specimen of that old spirit of injustice and harshness towards me, which would grieve me much more if I

you listen so composedly Judithe, to such a disgraceful calumny. Does it not excite you to indignation?"

"To own the truth, dearest lady," Judithe replied, "it rather moves me to scorn than to anger."

"You have ever a ready answer, and an apt one too," the marquise said, and gently had not been long accustomed to your calumnies, so that they do not now distress me more than the story of "Peau d'Ane." This is what you say: 'When you write an account of the Battle of Turin and of the posts which you attacked, I recommend you not to mention the resolution you had taken to put me out of the world on that occasion. It would not sound well.' I really should like to know, sir, how you came to devise so great an impossibility, so perfect an absurdity. The Austrians, who, as a nation, are remarkable for their spirit of honour and generosity, would have looked with horror on the author of so infamous a fratricide. Indeed, sir, you ought to die of shame at having harboured so vile an opinion of me.—*From the Comte de Bonneval's Letters to his Brother.*

It is evident that this brother was a fool, and a mean and selfish egotist.—*Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne.*

stroking the young girl's cheek, she added, "The vivacity of your feelings and the composure of your manners scarcely agree together my love."

"I believe that outward tranquillity keeps in check the over-quick impulses of my heart."

"Ah! is it even so!" exclaimed the marquise, with a faint approach at a smile. There is something at work, then, in that young heart of yours. Something that needs to be kept down."

"To be kept in order at least," Judithe answered, with a slight blush. "If I was ever to allow that *something* to assume the upper hand it might end some day by getting the better of me."

Madame de Bonneval fixed her eyes with an anxious scrutinising glance on that thoughtful but serene countenance, which presented a striking contrast to the expres-

sion of her own haggard and careworn face.

Unlike as they were in age, in mind, and in disposition, there was to each of them a great interest in the other's society. Madame de Bonneval found in her young companion a sympathy wholly unmixed with common-place compassion, the thing she most dreaded and abhorred ; and to Judithe the struggles and the emotions of her aged friend were full of that sort of excitement which the romance of real life awakens in those who for the first time are thrown in contact with it. Her good sense and precocious intelligence fitted her for this unequal companionship.

The women of that period, when not educated in convents, were in most instances old of their age ; at fifteen or sixteen they were already well versed in the world's ways ; had yielded to its influence,

or learned to withstand its contagion at an age when in other times and countries they would only have been considered as emerging from childhood.

Fourth Chapter.

“A varied scene

So richly spreads that scarce the eye can know
Where most to rest admiring,
For hills and hills of every form and shape
Rise o'er each other, till among the skies
In rocky peaks their tops from sight escape,
Gathering around them every cloud that flies.
To some the purple Thyme their tint supplies,
Some glow in yellow broom.”—LADY NORTHAMPTON.

“Lucy loved all that grew upon the ground,
And loveliness in all things living found,
The gilded fly, the fern upon the wall,
Were Nature's work, and admirable all.”—CRABBE.

“Quiet altars ; Jesus there,
Mary's image, meek and fair,
Silent whispering, twilight round
These make consecrated ground !
Better still with holy poor
Scattered on the wide church floor,
With the tinkling beads they tell,
And whispers scarcely audible.”—F. W. FABER.

WHEN Mademoiselle de Gontaut was entering on her seventeenth year, and her intimacy

with Madame de Bonneval was at its height, her health suddenly became very delicate; her parents grew alarmed at her daily increasing languor and paleness, and consulted the physicians. They were unanimously of opinion that she required change of air and of scene; that study and late hours should be given up; and a somewhat lengthened residence in the country resorted to. Pure air, fresh milk, walking and riding would alone restore her strength, and bring back their wonted bloom to Mademoiselle Judithe's pale cheeks. Such was the decision that the faculty arrived at, and Madame de Biron, who for some time past had observed that her daughter never returned from Madame de Bonneval's house without a feverish flush, or a look of languid exhaustion, was delighted to find a pretext for breaking off her intercourse with a person whose highly-wrought feelings, and gloomy turn of mind exercised an unhealthy

influence over one who, in the ardour of her grateful sympathy, learned to brood over the wrongs, and to suffer from the griefs so unreservedly imparted to her. It was accordingly decided that Judithe, accompanied by Madame Dupuis, should forthwith proceed to the ancestral residence of the family, an ancient chateau in Gascony, where her brother, the Vicomte de Gontaut, had been shooting hares and killing time for the last two years, in expiation for the sin of having made up to a lady to whom the Regent was also paying his court.¹ Not all the favor his family enjoyed with His Royal Highness had hitherto sufficed to procure his pardon and recall from banishment.

On a fine spring day, in a huge family

¹ Gontaut had paid his court in a certain quarter where the Regent was his rival. He had been neither discreet nor modest, and was in consequence banished.
—*St. Simon's Memoirs.*

coach, together with her nurse and her waiting-women, who were loudly deploring their cruel fate in having to exchange the civilisation of Paris for the ruralities of Biron, Mademoiselle de Gontaut took her departure from the old Hotel of the Faubourg St. Germain, and for several days and nights travelled along those interminable paved high roads bordered with rows of trees, which seem to have been planted on purpose to keep from the weary traveller's sight the least glimpse of the lovely scenery of France, which so often exists in close vicinity to these merciless highways, and through the heart of which the railways have lately forced their passage with such picturesque success.

The journey from Paris to Gascony, now so swiftly accomplished, was at that time long and tedious. Though the travellers seldom stopped at night, many days elapsed before they reached their destination. The roads were bad, the jolts incessant; Madame

Dupuis sleepy and depressed; the waiting-women frightened and out of temper. As to Judithe, her eyes were busy with the clouds, the waving trees, the flights of birds, the blue expanse of the noon-day sky, the gorgeous bed of the setting sun; her ears with the rustle of the wind in the tall elm branches, the twitter of the birds, the cawing of the rooks. A furrowed field, a boy swinging on a gate, the distant whistle of the ploughman, or the bark of the shepherd dog, country sights and sounds, brought repose to her overwrought mind and refreshment to her languid frame. And as they advanced towards the south of France, and a wilder scene broke on her sight, the *Landes* of Gascony, with their purple and orange hues, the brighter green of the enamelled meadows; the distant Pyrrenees, with their Alpine grandeur, and their own peculiar softness of outline and colouring, she marvelled at the emotion which swelled in her bosom, and brought tears into her eyes.

The love of Nature, in its simplest or its wildest aspects, did not generally exist in the age in which she lived. Books had not yet analysed, or poetry revealed it. Stately gardens, verdant slopes, majestic trees, were duly appreciated. The divines, the philosophers, the authors of that day would read and meditate in the shady bowers of St. Cloud, or the avenues of Versailles.

Madame de Sévigné and her children would wander in the fair woods of Les Rochers, and praise the peaceful beauties of some smiling hamlet or fertile valley. The rose, the nightingale and the moon received their meed of poetic praise; but the wild-flower growing on a ruined wall; the fox-glove and the heath on the barren moor; the solitary beach and the storm-beaten rock had but few admirers in those days, when wit was more highly esteemed than genius; fancy more in favour than imagina-

tion ; and beauty's conventional types claimed the exclusive homage of the artist and the poet. Some few individuals even then had doubtless an instinctive perception of the charm which lies in Nature's severer moods, in her secret haunts, and her untutored children. That nameless sense which, like the diviner's rod detects the springs that lie beneath the surface of this hard world's ways, may have served here and there to gild some lone and joyless existence. It is generally the pilgrims of life, Kilmeny,

“ Whose eye was as still as the Emerald lea,
Or the mist that sleeps on a waveless sea,”

or the bearer of the strange banner on which *Excelsior* is written, who can see a story in the pale face of a child, a creed in a rough-hewn cross on the way-side, a poem in a poor flower treasured up in a dingy attic ; aye, such stories, such faith, and such poems as lie very deep in men's hearts, undiscerned by the thoughtless, unrecked of

by the worldly. Music which man has never composed echoes in their ears; poetry which man has never written thrills through their souls; pictures unpainted by man's hand pass before their eyes. The sea, with its deep voice; the human face, with its strange pathos; the blue sky over their heads; the green sward beneath their feet, speak a language they understand. Toil and pain do not stifle the accents of that language. Sin and pleasure ignore it.

The eighteenth century was a bad listener. It heard neither the still small voice at its side, nor the distant thunder of the coming storm; but at all times there *are* some who hearken to Nature's whispers, and Judith was one of them.

“Yes, it is indeed your little sister who has the honour of saluting you, M. de Gontaut.”

These words were accompanied by a half-

formal, half-smiling curtsey, and the Vicomte, who had uttered an exclamation of surprise as he handed out of the carriage a slim and graceful young girl when he had expected to see a mere child, kissed his sister on both cheeks, and, taking hold of her hand, led her into the drawing-room.

François Armand de Gontaut was a handsome-looking man of about thirty years of age, as brave, as lively, as frivolous, and as unprincipled as might have been expected from one who belonged to an aristocracy remarkable for its valor and its agreeable qualities, and to a Court as abandoned as that of the Regent of France, with whom he had stood in the highest favour till the moment that he had crossed the fancies and offended the vanity of that worthless Prince. Two years of banishment had given him time to repent at leisure of so uncourtier-like an imprudence. He was heartily tired of field-sports, which had been his principal

resource against *ennui* during his compulsory residence in his ancestral domains; he had read and re-read the books which composed the scanty library of the chateau; the publications of the day were slow in reaching him, and letters from Paris, his chief amusement, did not arrive more than once a week. He was, therefore, inclined to welcome anybody or anything that held out the least prospect of amusement, or even of novelty in his monotonous existence.

The arrival of Judithe, whom at the Hotel de Biron he would probably not have noticed, was quite an event in the country. She looked, too, as if with some encouragement she might be induced to converse. There was a certain expression in her eyes and a smile lurking in the corners of her mouth, that announced a degree of vivacity which might possibly turn out to be entertaining. He was quite agreeably surprised to find her so much less of a child than

he had imagined her to be; and having led her to a high-backed sofa, and placed a foot-stool for her small feet to rest on, which, otherwise would not have reached the ground, he seated himself in an arm-chair opposite to her, and said, with a smile :

“Allow me, my charming little sister, to welcome you to this most ancient, noble, most penitential abode. I feel a sort of malicious satisfaction in seeing you arrive with pale cheeks from that wicked town of Paris. It is but fair that we poor country folk should have something to boast of as regards health at least. You must admit that I do credit to the *régime* which His Royal Highness so kindly prescribed for me.”

“Indeed I rejoice, sir, that my cheeks have not hitherto belied me. I have such a foolish trick of blushing when anything gives me pleasure that I feared

you would disbelieve the report of my illness."

"And pray, my sweet sister, is that same trick of blushing the fashion now in Paris?"

"Artificial blushes, I have been assured, are thought in the best taste at Court."

M. de Gontaut, much amused with this reply, exclaimed:

"Upon my word, my dear child, you have not been brought up at Paris for nothing. It is quite refreshing to talk to you. I suspect that you will turn out to be a very entertaining little person."

"By no means, my dear brother. I would not for the world attempt anything of the kind."

"What, not even to amuse your friends?"

"No, not since I heard the fable of the ass and the lap-dog."

"And what was the lesson you drew from it then, my charming little moralist?"

“That the graver sort of persons should never attempt to be frolicsome.”

“I am vastly partial to the graver sort of persons, especially when they happen to be about your age, my dear; we shall get on exceedingly well together, I see. You will help me to get through the day.”

“Have you happened to lose your little dog, sir?” asked Judithe, with an innocent expression of countenance, that greatly diverted M. de Gontaut.

“I understand the hint, mademoiselle; you are not to be treated like a plaything. Well, we will be as wise as judges, especially of an evening; but you must not then be scandalised if I sometimes fall asleep on the sofa. Come, I will show you over this dungeon of ours; and to-morrow you shall mount my quiet mare; we will scour the country, and stir up M. de Bonrepos in his old tumble-down castle, where his affairs, and, as he pretends, his friendship for me,

have brought him down for a few weeks. By to-morrow I hope you will have quite left off blushing when I talk nonsense to you. Confess you were a little afraid of me at first."

"I am always a little afraid of those I love, so you must not expect that I shall quite get over my fear of you," Judithe said, with such an engaging smile, that her brother from that moment took a great fancy to her.

They spent some months together, and though no two persons could have been found more unlike each other, in character, in tastes, or in tone of mind, yet they got on together extremely well.

A thorough man of the world, M. de Gontaut had arrived at the age of thirty without having once looked upon life in a serious point of view. His existence had been one course of incessant dissipation up to the moment of his banishment to

Biron, and the intense *ennui* of that seclusion had wearied and disgusted him, but in no respect altered his views, or modified his character. Hunting and shooting were but sorry resources to a man accustomed to the life of a capital and of a Court, and of such a capital and such a Court as those of France at that epoch. His mind was well cultivated, but the books which he delighted in were those which, as a gentleman and a man of honour, he could not place in his sister's way.

Judithe, such as we have described her, with her deep and tender feelings, her high-minded character, and her fervent enthusiasm, could hardly expect to find a congenial companion in the light-hearted and dissipated Vicomte de Gontaut. He could neither win her confidence nor inspire her with esteem, but she could not but feel grateful for his kindness, or fail to be captivated by the charm of his manners, and

the entertaining playfulness of his conversation. Her habitual reserve concealed from his notice the deeper traits of her character, but he appreciated the piquancy and originality of her mind, and encouraged to the utmost her conversational powers; and so they talked, laughed, rode, and played at cards, and whiled away the time in a manner highly, if not equally, satisfactory to both. A constant subject of conversation between them was his approaching marriage with the beautiful Adélaïde de Gramont,¹ that auspicious event which was to be the means of bringing his banishment to an end, and the occasion of his

¹ Biron, about the same time, married his son Gontaut to the eldest daughter of the Duc de Guiche, a tall and singularly beautiful person, with a perfect figure, and a vast deal of wit, to whom her father gave 20,000 francs a-year. This marriage, which promised so well, turned out as ill as possible.—*St. Simon's Memoirs.*

return to Paris, the sole object of his desires.

Judithe was well acquainted with her brother's betrothed, and would now and then indulge in enthusiastic descriptions of her beauty, wit, and vivacity; but to these expressions of admiration M. de Gontaut listened very coldly. The amount of her fortune, the interest her family possessed at Court, were themes of far more interest to him. This did not cause Judithe any surprise. She was too much accustomed to this mode of viewing the affairs of life to be astonished at any manifestation of it. It seemed perfectly natural, at least it was quite in harmony with the tone of mind habitual to those amongst whom she lived, that her brother should care much more for the prospect of returning to Paris, or for his future chances of Court favour, than for the beauty and accomplishments of his intended bride.

She had seen her own sister enchanted to marry M. de Bonac, a plain and elderly diplomate, whose principal merit in her eyes consisted in the diamonds which he presented to her, and the title of ambassadress which, as his wife, she was to bear.

One of her brothers had become a priest without the shadow of a vocation, in order to enjoy some rich ecclesiastical benefice; and her father, whom she loved and respected, and who was a good sort of man upon the whole, swam with the tide, paid assiduous court to the Regent, and was not ashamed to swell the numbers of those who, as his friend M. de St. Simon informs us, enlivened the *petits soupirs* of the Palais Royal by their licentious *bon mots*.¹ It was not strange

¹ Biron who, as well as his son, is now rolling in wealth, and with no end of places, was at that time very poor, and burthened with a numerous family. A

then, that his daughter should consider it as a matter of course that men of the world should place the interests of ambition and of fortune above those of feeling or of conscience. Her own sentiments and inclinations were far more a subject of astonishment to herself. She could hardly account for the peculiarity of taste which led her to feel more admiration for a half-blown rose bathed in the morning dew, than for the finest diamonds that ever sparkled at Versailles; to prefer a walk over a common perfumed with the fragrance of the wild thyme to a rehearsal of Lully's newest opera; to be more pleased with one of those words that touch a secret spring in the heart than with the most brilliant man's necessities drive him sometimes to strange expedients. He enrolled himself amongst the *roués*, and supped almost every night at the Palais Royal, where, in order to please, he talked as freely as any of them.—*St. Simon's Memoirs.*

witticism uttered by Parisian lips ; to find herself inspired with more fervent devotion in the simple village church, when the rosary was said at night by the assembled peasantry, or the holy sacrifice was offered up at daybreak by their venerable pastor, than when listening to the sermons of Massillon and Bossuet, assisting at the King's High Mass, or at the famous vespers of St. Cyr. It must be acknowledged in extenuation of this last-mentioned peculiarity, that the aged priest whose simple homilies went straight to her heart, was one of those angels upon earth whose life is one long prayer, who deny everything to themselves and nothing to others, who never ask anything of the rich but an alms for the poor, and if it is refused give in return for that refusal their prayers for those unhappy ones who neglect for themselves the only royal road to Heaven. Judithe felt to her very

heart's core the perfection of such a character, just as she had instinctively discerned the poetry of the solitary flower, the beauty of the sunset clouds. The words which fell from the lips of this poor and obscure priest were treasured up in her memory. When he spake of suffering, of strength sought and found at the foot of the Cross, of the painful ways which God's chosen ones are sometimes called upon to tread, for the sake of their own souls, or to win mercy for those of others, of the might of certain sacrifices once offered, and at once accepted when earth's happiness is renounced, and in exchange a blessing obtained which we have scarcely ventured to pray for, but which God grants at the eleventh hour, she listened, she pondered, she received the hard saying, scarcely conscious as yet of its full meaning, but with a presentiment of its truth and force. The seed had been sown; it

was hereafter to bear fruit. It is by slow degrees that the grain expands in the well-seasoned soil. Many a wave breaks on the shore before the tide reaches its height.

Fifth Chapter.

“Sous les drapeaux d’une Mère chérie
Tous deux jadis nous avons combattus ;
Je m’en souviens !” . . . —BERANGER.

‘Why came I so untimely forth
Into a world, which wanting thee,
Could entertain us with no worth
Or shadow of felicity ?
That time should me so far remove
From that which I was born to love.
Yet fairest blossom ! do not slight
That age which you may know so soon.
The rosy morn resigns her light
And milder glory to the noon,
And then what wonders shall you do,
Whose dawning beauty warms us so ?”—WALLER.

JUDITHE had always loved the poor, and in the village of Biron she soon formed acquaintances. Old people greeted her with blessings, and children followed her with smiles.

In one of the cottages, at the outskirts of the neighbouring forest, there lived a man who had been a soldier, and whose legs had been shot off in the Italian campaign. He managed to support himself and his mother on his small and dearly-bought pension, eking it out by the sale of baskets made with the twigs of the willow. He had a good open countenance, and a fund of French gaiety, which neither poverty nor infirmity could suppress. While plying his trade he whiled away the time by singing sometimes hymns, and sometimes warlike ditties. Judithe, in her walks with Madame Dupuis, had often lingered near this cottage, and listened to the simple songs of the crippled soldier. One day, that she was leaning against the gate of the little garden, Lafond, which was the man's name, perceived her, and suddenly broke off his singing.

“Oh, do go on, my good friend,” she

exclaimed. "We delight in your songs. Pray do not deprive me of the pleasure of hearing you," and gliding to his side, she sat down by him on his wooden bench, and listened to several couplets of a very long ballad. When it was ended she bought of Lafond the basket he had been weaving, and began to fill it with the heaths and the wild orchises which she had gathered on the common. While her hands were thus employed, she managed to engage the soldier in conversation, and to draw from him the history of his campaigns. Pleased with his listeners, he grew eager in his descriptions of the fights he had seen, and the hardships he had undergone in that fair land, bright and sunny as his own Gascony, but not so dear to his eyes or to his heart. He happened to mention in a casual manner that he had served in that campaign under the Comte de Bonneval. Judithe glanced with a smile at Madame

Dupuis, and pressed her hand when Lafond exclaimed :

“Ah ! that was as gallant a fellow as ever buckled on a sword in a good cause. I warrant you that there were not many to match him in the tilt-yard or on the field of battle. His heart went always with his hand, whether he dealt a blow at the foe, or chucked a crown-piece to a beggar. Nothing ever came amiss to him ; he thought no more of charging single-handed a troop of Heyducks than of leading out a lady to dance a saraband. Ah ! he was a trump if ever there was one.”

Judithe whispered to her companion :

“I suppose you recognise your foster child in this description, nurse?”

“Look here, mademoiselle,” continued Lafond, and as he spoke he drew from his pocket a small and richly-ornamented vinaigrette. “Our colonel made me a

present of this toy on the very day when both my legs were taken off, what was left of them I should say, for that deuced cannon-ball saved the surgeons more than half the trouble. Well, I fainted away like a sick girl after the operation, more shame for me, and our colonel held this little concern to my nose, as I was afterwards informed, and when I came to myself he said: 'There's a keepsake for you, Lafond. Take care of it against the next time that you find yourself in these gentlemen's hands.' 'Thank you kindly, colonel,' I said, 'but as to the next time I hope I shall stand excused. Enough is as good as a feast, as the proverb has it.' Well, I have kept this bauble ever since, and every time I set eyes on it I seem to see before me our colonel's handsome face, and that look of his which said as plain as looks

can speak: 'Ah! my good friends the Austrians, have a care how you meddle with me!'"

Madame Dupuis drew a deep sigh, and seemed about to make some observation. Judithe put her finger on her lips; she could not endure that the soldier should hear those words which had so often made her heart ache: "He has gone over to the enemy."

"You were, then, very much attached to your colonel, Lafond?" she said.

"I should think so indeed, mademoiselle. I should be an ungrateful fellow if I was not, and that you see is not exactly my disposition. Every year I get our good curé to say a mass for him, and the ten sous I give him, he always makes over to the poorest person in the parish. That must draw down a blessing on my colonel; don't you think so, mademoiselle?"

"Yes, indeed I do, Lafond, and I should very much like to hear that mass."

“Well, and why not then, if you are so minded? Thursday next M. le Curé has promised to say it.”

“We shall certainly come,” Judithe eagerly exclaimed. “Shall we not, dear nurse?” and then, taking a kind leave of Lafond, she departed, promising to visit him again. She kept her word. There were few days that she and Madame Dupuis did not direct their steps towards the forest cottage, generally bringing with them some little gift for the crippled soldier and his mother; fruit from the garden of the chateau, or a parcel of snuff, or some article of clothing, or a rosary which Judithe put into his hand with a whispered recommendation to say it often for his colonel. Sometimes she offered to teach him new songs which she had learnt in Paris or from her brother. The famous elegy of “Mousieur Malbroucke” had just been composed, and Lafond, in spite of his dislike of the great duke, was

almost moved to tears at the description of the funeral, and of the grief of the lady "dressed all in black."

One day that Judithe had walked as usual to the cottage, she found her crippled friend sitting on the bench in his garden, with his eyes gloomily fixed on the ground. His manner was completely altered, he hardly took any notice of her, and when, to put him in a good humour, she proposed to sing him one of his favourite songs, he gruffly answered :

"I don't want to hear it. I don't care about songs. Oh dear me! Oh dear me !"

"What *can* be the matter with you, Lafond ?"

"Aye! it is time, indeed, to ask what is the matter with me! Come, mademoiselle, let me now just hear the truth from you. Come, out with it at once, and no shilly-shallying. *Is* it, *can* it be true I say

what your servant told me yesterday, that my colonel—O Lord! how hard it is to get the words out—that my colonel has deserted; that he has gone over to the enemy?”

Judithe hung down her head in silence, and a deep blush suffused her cheeks. The soldier looked at her steadily for a moment, and then exclaimed, with bitterness: “And why, then, did not you look ashamed when I named him before; when, fool that I was, I sung out his praises. What business had you to smile and to ask with your pretty winning manner whether my colonel was not much beloved in the regiment, whether your cousin was not very brave, very generous. In the name of patience why did you deceive me so? Gone over to the enemy. He! the Comte de Bonneval! The wretch! I hate and despise him!”

As he said these words, he drew from his pocket the smelling-bottle which the

count had given him, and dashed it with violence beyond the garden-gate. Judithe started up from her seat with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes.

“You wrong him, Lafond. You are unjust. He was illused, unfairly treated. No man of spirit could have brooked such usage. They drove him to that fatal step. And now he saves the lives of Frenchmen, he receives them into his house, he tends the sick prisoners as if they were his own brothers. Believe me, Lafond, he is still as good and as kind as when you knew him.”

“Stop, stop, mademoiselle. That will not do. People are not to be taken in in that fashion. We are not to call good evil or evil good. A traitor is a traitor all the world over. Ah ! that I should have lived to call *him* by that name. Well, well ! no more of this. I will never think of him again.”

“Oh, but indeed, you will, Lafond ;

morning and evening when you say your prayers ; and then the curé's mass, you will get him to say it still ; why Lafond," she continued, as the soldier preserved a dogged silence, " why Lafond, did not our Lord pray for *His* soldiers when they went over to the enemy ?"

" Aye ! for St. Peter, the general of his church too ! Well, we will go on praying for my—for your cousin, mademoiselle. But to think of his serving on the wrong side ; with those confounded Austrians too. Who would have ever dreamed of such a thing ? But you are just as white as a sheet, my dear young lady. You are very fond of your cousin I suppose ?"

" I have never seen him, Lafond."

" Never seen the Comte de Bonneval. You have not seen, then, the handsomest man in France. Hey, nurse ?"

Madame Dupuis nodded assent, but at the same time drew a deep sigh.

As they were leaving the cottage Judithe saw the gold and enamelled vinaigrette lying on the road. She hastened to pick it up, and, retracing her steps, she held it out to the soldier with an expressive gesture of entreaty. He sorrowfully shook his head, and said :

“Keep it, mademoiselle. I cannot look at it now without a heartache. Besides, that bauble is better suited to a lady’s table than to a soldier’s waistcoat pocket. Do pray keep it, mademoiselle.” Judithe yielded to his request without further resistance, and carried off with secret pleasure the Comte de Bonneval’s rejected keepsake. She gave Lafond in return a reliquary which she had brought with her from Paris.

Poor child ! the exchange boded no good to her. The new possession which she so joyfully placed amongst her treasures was, alas, no hallowed relic. Nothing

sacred had touched it, no blessing rested upon it.

When Judithe entered the gallery of the Castle, laden with her basket of wild flowers, her broad green fan in her hand and her straw hat hanging on her arm, M. de Gontaut exclaimed:

“Now what have you been about charming shepherdess! Here is M. de Bonrepos quite pining for your society. He has been sitting before the chess-board like patience, or rather *impatience*, on a monument, as some barbarous English poet has it. He vows that you neglect us for a certain legless favourite, on whom you lavish your attentions.”

At these words an elderly sharp-featured gentleman rose, and made a profound obeisance to Judithe, who acknowledged it by a no less profound curtsy. Then sitting down at the chess-table, upon which her antagonist had already ranged the pieces, she said:

“You must give me the queen, M. de Bonrepos, and a bishop into the bargain.”

“Indeed, Mademoiselle Judithe, your request is too unreasonable. If I agree to forego the support of the fair sex, can you in conscience expect that I should give up that of the church also?”

“But will not your devotion to the fair sex induce you to risk a defeat at its hands,” Judithe retorted with a smile. “Surely you will not refuse to give me for once a chance of victory.”

“I humbly throw myself at your feet, Mademoiselle Judithe, to entreat you not to carry so far the tyranny which you exercise over your devoted servant as to force him to surrender one of his bishops into your hands.”

“I must have a castle then,” Judithe exclaimed, sweeping away from the board the condemned piece.

“So be it then,” M. de Bonrepos ejaculated, with an affected sigh. “I perceive that my fair enemy is as much bent upon my destruction as ever was her namesake on that of the doomed Holofernes.”

“Your ideas, M. de Bonrepos, are eminently poetical,” observed M. de Gontaut, who was pacing up and down the gallery, alternately watching the game and the approach of the courier from Paris, who had just come in sight at the opposite end of the avenue.

“Mademoiselle de Gontaut has been, I confess it, the means of awakening my slumbering muse. It is the same with poetry and with love. Age covers with its ashes both those divine flames, but under those ashes the fire still smoulders.”

“Upon my word, M. de Bonrepos, I do not know which to admire most, your

gallantry or your wit. I am exceedingly flattered at the homage you pay to this demure little sister of mine, and I congratulate her that in this remote corner of the world she has met with so distinguished an admirer."

"My admiration, my passion, I may call it for Mademoiselle Judithe, is of far more ancient standing than you suppose, monsieur le vicomte. This mortal wound was long ago inflicted on my too sensitive heart, and the daily sight of the object of my admiration only serves to increase my idolatry."

"And are you really then of opinion that this little face is worth looking at?" and, as he spoke, M. de Gontaut drew back the curls that hung on each side of his sister's face, exhibiting its perfect oval and the dimples in her cheeks. "But, perhaps, you are not aware what a little philosopher she is; what deep books she

reads. The Fathers of the Church at one moment, M. de la Rochefoucauld's maxims at another. I assure you that she was born just fifty years too late. The Hotel de Rambouillet would have had in her quite a charming little blue-stockings. You should hear her converse with M. le Curé. Morality, history, politics; nothing comes amiss to her. She is never at a loss, this little girl. You are not angry, Mademoiselle de Gontaut?"

"Not angry, sir, that you laugh at me; but not at all pleased that you make known to others what I tell you in confidence."

"But it is very fortunate, my dear child, that I am here to talk nonsense to you. If left to yourself you would really grow so wise that your hair would be in danger of turning grey. Don't I tell you very amusing stories, my dear?"

"Not so amusing as Monsieur de Bonrepos, my dear brother."

“That is all gross flattery, given in exchange for his compliments. His head will be quite turned, and when you go away he will never put up with my society or with his solitary home.”

“You will be the cause, sir, of my losing the game. Don’t you see that while I am listening to you, my adversary is thinking of nothing but his moves.”

“I stand rebuked, mademoiselle. You are quite right, and I the more willingly promise to be silent that I hear Lafleur on the stairs, bringing up the Paris letters.”

M. de Gontaut seized on the packet which the servant presented to him, and was soon absorbed in its contents. Meanwhile the game at chess proceeded.

M. de Bonrepos was a man of large fortune, considerable ability, and a great deal of eccentricity. He was a very old friend of the Biron family and Judithe had

always been a particular favourite with him. He had directed her studies, taken pleasure in conversing with her, in teaching her to play at chess, in lavishing upon her extravagant encomiums, and paying her compliments which made her laugh, and put her in mind she would say of Mademoiselle de Scudéry's novels, which he was, by the way, always strenuously recommending her to read. His thoughts were always running upon her, and he was constantly forming plans for her future destiny. He never mentioned her but as the prettiest and cleverest little person in France, and emphatically designated the man she would marry as *the* happy man *par excellence*. He had wished at one time to unite her to his nephew; but her extreme youth, and M. de Bonac's appointment to the embassy of Spain proved obstacles to this scheme, and the handsome Françoise, her sister, became the diplomat's bride. At the bot-

tom of his heart too, and in confidence to his friends, M. de Bonrepos would admit that, despite his qualities as a negotiator and his merits as an accomplished gentleman, he did not consider his nephew altogether deserving so incomparable a wife. He was not much displeased, the excellent old man, when his friends hinted that, like old Absolute, he meant "to marry the girl himself," and he doubtless put on a mysterious and sentimental expression of countenance when bantered on the subject.

"Well! at all events, Saintes is nearer Paris than Biron," ejaculated M. de Gontaut, as he folded up one of the letters he had been reading, and advanced towards the chess-table. "What do you say to the suggestion, my dear? I am *advised* to pay my respects to our venerable great aunt, the lady abbess of that

convent,¹ and to give you at the same time the opportunity of visiting your sister the new coadjutress.² This is by way of affording us a little change of scene, as they kindly observe. Really they have hit upon a somewhat peculiar mode of raising our spirits. The choice might have been happier, but it is no doubt a step in the right direction. The late King used to say to Madame de Maintenon, when he was bored to death with the lady in waiting: '*De grâce, madame, changeons d'ennui*;' ³ and so hurrah for the

¹ Tired of shooting hares at Biron, in the remotest part of Gascony, Gontaut went to the Abbey of Saintes, of which his great aunt, M. de Lauzun's sister, was superioress. He remained there some time, and at last received permission to return to Paris, in order to be married to Mademoiselle de Gramont.—*St. Simon's Mémoires*.

² Marguerite Bathilde, the eldest daughter of the Duc de Biron, was coadjutress of the Abbey of Our Lady, at Saintes.—*Dictionnaire de la Noblesse*.

³ Historical.

convent. For Saintes *versus* Biron. Are you prepared to start to-morrow, Mademoiselle de Gontaut?"

"I am at your orders, sir, but, oh, how sorry I shall be to leave Biron."

"You don't say so, my dear! I really begin to doubt your sanity. It seems to me a symptom of absolute derangement to take a fancy to this gloomy old pile of brick and mortar."

"But does it not occur to you, my dear brother, that I shall be in danger of losing much of the pleasure of your society, not to speak of that of M. de Bonrepos?"

"You under estimate my devotion, Mademoiselle Judithe, if you suppose that as long as I am allowed to pay my respects to you in the parlour of Saintes, and I presume that you do not intend to retire behind the grate, I shall omit to take up my residence in that time-honoured city, and keep up in your

mind by frequent visits the recollection—”

“Of having had the honour of beating you at chess, M. de Bonrepos, which I flatter myself that I am about to do. Check to the king and checkmate I believe.”

“Oh, by all the muses, the graces, the nymphs!” exclaimed M. de Bonrepos. “Give me back that last move.”

“By no means, my dear sir. I am quite elated at this unexpected triumph, and I wish you good night with a most benignant feeling of complacency.”

“Indeed, I cannot allow you thus to depart, most cruel Judithe. It is but fair to give me a chance of revenge. Do not be inexorable, most lovely of tyrants. Holofernes is at your feet.”

“I never like to play after the sun is set. I feel as if my wits declined with the daylight.”

“But at any rate sit down a moment

longer," said M. de Gontaut, detaining her with gentle force beside him on the sofa. "Give yourself leisure to enjoy your success, and listen at the same time to the news from Paris;" and he read out of the letters before him as follows: " 'They are all in good health at the Hotel de Biron. They are vastly entertained with our letters.' They are easily pleased, worthy people, or we must be very clever to write amusing letters from this ancestral dungeon. Well, let us see now what news they favour us with. 'The weather is very sultry; something close and heavy in the air.' Ah, me! I should like to feel the weight of a little Parisian air at this moment. 'The King of Spain is ailing. Alberoni is not to have the hat. The Cardinal de Polignac does not pay his debts. (I hope that is getting to be the fashion.) Made-

moiselle de Clermont is handsomer than ever. Her Royal Highness the Duchesse de Berry'—ahem, what next I wonder. 'The little king drew his own portrait the other day, scribbled his name under it, and ordered it to be sent to Madame de Maintenon.¹ The story of the ball is quite true. I shall tell you all about that another time, M. de Bonrepos; but listen to this, it is really curious. Nothing is talked of now in Paris but the Battle of Peterwaradin,² and the wonder-

¹ This anecdote is alluded to in Madame de Maintenon's correspondence.

² Bonneval covered himself with glory during the war between Austria and Turkey. His conduct at the Battle of Peterwaradin made him famous. At the head of a handful of men he kept at bay for a whole hour an immense force of Jannissaries. At last he fell, wounded by a lance, and was carried off to the victorious army by the only ten men who remained of his regiment. . . . The

ful exploits of our cousin de Bonneval. The Emperor has written to him in the most flattering terms, and Prince Eugene

Parisian society received with enthusiasm the accounts of the French general's successes, and of his chivalrous exploits in this sort of crusade. It was then that he conceived the idea of returning to his country by means of letters of pardon, which he accordingly solicited.—*M. Sainte Beuve's Causeries du Lundi.*

Prince Eugene commanded the Imperial Army in Hungary, and Bonneval served under him. He distinguished himself greatly at the Battle of Peterwaradin, where he was severely wounded. Prince Eugene wrote on this occasion to the Marquise de Bonneval to give her news of her son, and said that his conduct had proved him to be a truly great captain. The Emperor himself wrote to Bonneval in the most flattering terms. After this glorious campaign he returned to Vienna, and appeared there with great *éclat*. The Comte de Lue, his relation, who was French ambassador at that Court, consulted the Abbé Dubois as to the means of facilitating his return to France. This abbé, who was from the same province as Bon-

to his mother to congratulate her on his safety, and to compliment her on his valour and talents. It appears that this wild, extravagant, reckless cousin of ours fought like a lion, was wounded in the *mêlée*, displayed extraordinary skill in the way that he manœuvred his troops; in short, turns out to be a great military genius, and a hero into the bargain. The Emperor compliments him; the great captain extols him, and what is still more wonderful, in Paris itself his praises are in everybody's mouth; the past is forgotten; and, wonder of wonders, his return is talked of, indeed, considered probable. We live, it must be confessed, in some-
neval, eagerly took up the question, and suggested that Prince Eugene should be requested to interest himself in the matter, which he did. The Court was at that time by way of seeking in every possible way to conciliate the Prince.—
Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne.

what strange times! M. de St. Simon's hair actually stood on end, I am told, when the matter was first broached in the Council of Regency. He looked almost as aghast, they say, as when M. du Maine was made "*Duc et pair.*" It is, upon my word, a very amusing change of scene," exclaimed M. de Gontaut, as he put down the letter. "We really shall arrive at feeling proud of the relationship. How now, my little sister, what is the meaning of that deep blush?"

"I am not blushing, sir."

"In that case, my dear, the pride of conquest must have flushed your cheeks. But, by the immortal gods, I will consent never to see Paris again if tears are not making their way down those glowing cheeks! Dew-drops on a damask-rose, M. de Bonrepos would say. Ah! I remember now, you are the devoted ally of the old

marchioness. You must know," he continued, turning to M. de Bonrepos, "that that modern Cornelia, the Marquise de Bonneval, has made this young lady believe that her son is the very pink of chivalry, quite a knight of the round-table, a perfect Amadis de Gaul. Is it not so, Mademoiselle de Gontaut?"

"I always have felt inclined to take the part of those I hear violently attacked; and I have so sincere a regard for Madame de Bonneval that I cannot feel indifferent to an event that interests her so deeply. I am sure her son does not deserve all the harsh things you have said of him."

"Ah! mademoiselle," observed M. de Bonrepos, "that tendency to defend those whom the world visits with its blame, is a dangerous disposition in one of your sex and age. In such cases Chris-

tian charity often degenerates into Quixotism."

"What would you say, M. de Bonrepos, if I were to plead guilty to a certain sympathy with the Knight of La Mancha?"

"Ah! did I not, then, hit the mark, most peerless Judithe, when I detected the only weak point in that little stronghold of perfection which I deem your fair self to be."

M. de Gontaut laughed and said:

"What I admire in this little girl is the firm manner in which she maintains her ground. There is no driving her from her position. Her replies have a sort of quiet decision about them which my light artillery cannot withstand. We had better wish her good night now with the best grace we can affect. I assure you that we are not at all in her good books. I don't know when she will for-

give me for my sneers at the hero of Peterwaradin."

"You would care very little for my resentment, sir, but I would not willingly deprive myself of the pleasure of giving you a parting kiss,—the pledge of our reconciliation. And now farewell M. de Bonrepos till we meet in the *parloir* at Saintes. I shall expect from you a whole budget of new stories about the civil wars and the Court of the late King."

When Judithe found herself that night alone with Madame Dupuis, and the good old lady had unfastened her dress, and taken the comb out of her hair, she abruptly turned round, and with a bright smile, said:

"What do you think my brother has heard to-day from Paris?"

"That he may return there for his marriage?"

"No; guess again."

“That *you* are to be married before long?”

“Oh, dear, no! something much pleasanter than that. Give another guess.”

“How can I tell? That the little King has had a finger-ache, I dare say?”

“Nonsense! How can you be so foolish. Now open your ears wide, nurse, as wide as you can, for I have great news to tell you. What should you say, I wonder, if my cousin de Bonneval was about to come home?”

“Oh! that is not possible, my dear child. It is too good to be true.”

“Well, whether it is possible or not, it is quite true that there is every likelihood of his return. Are you not overjoyed to hear it?”

“Ah! but a likelihood is not a certainty.”

“Nay, but it is the first step towards it. The first step, nurse;” and Judithe,

who did not often laugh, and very seldom danced, put out her tiny foot, and performed the first steps of the court-minuet with a child-like joy and grace, which went straight to the heart of her fond, faithful, and foolish old nurse.

Sixth Chapter.

"Not till the rushing winds forget to rave
Is Heaven's sweet smile reflected in the wave."

ROGERS.

"Lovely lasting peace of mind,
Sweet delight of human mind,
Heavenly born and bred on high,
To crown the favourites of the sky,
With more of happiness below,
Than victors in a triumph know."—PARNELL.

"And whose the lovely form that shares,
A sister's cell, a sister's prayers?
No votary she of convent shade,
So say those locks in lengthened braid,
So say the blushes and the sighs,
The tremors that unbidden rise."

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE French convents before the Revolution must often have presented startling contrasts, and harboured within their walls

a strange variety of minds and of characters; individuals whose feelings and whose destinies were as widely different as any that history records, or imagination conceives.

Now that no human interest, no earthly inducements point to the cloister, that parents and relatives can have no object in compelling a young person to enter upon a life, the holiest, the highest, the most exquisitely blest to those whose vocation it is to tread that narrow path, but at the same time the hardest to flesh and blood that the mind can conceive, it would be difficult to find an instance of its being embraced from any other motive but the love of God, and the desire to follow the evangelical counsels, proposed to all indeed, but which, in the words of Scripture, it is not given to all to receive. But it was not always thus. At the time of the aristocratic Gallican France of the eighteenth century, the monasteries and

religious-houses received within their walls many, indeed, whose choice of that destiny was as free, whose piety was as ardent as at this day ; but many were also consigned to them by the tacit undisputed influence of their families.

Later in life, repentance sometimes brought or society drove to the same shelter some whose passions or whose weakness had led them astray ; and side by side, reciting the same prayers, and wearing the same habit, may have been seen the young girl who had grown up from childhood in the shade of the sanctuary, and the woman who, after draining the cup of earthly pleasure, had been forced into retirement by remorse or despair. The same black veil concealed a face beaming with that peculiar joy which belongs to the true nun, and the careworn features of one of earth's weary children.

Many causes combined at that time to

point to the cloister as, generally speaking, the only resource for women of rank, to whom society allowed no alternative between marriage and religious vows, and whose worldly circumstances precluded them from forming suitable alliances. Doubtless in a few cases, when fiery and impassioned natures were forced into a life repugnant to their inclinations, deplorable consequences may have ensued. In many others it produced only a tranquil acquiescence in an inevitable destiny, a regular performance of stated duties, a freedom from the exciting joys, but at the same time from the keen sorrows of life; and not seldom the bright examples of piety and holiness, which were never wholly wanting even in the least fervent communities, worked great changes in worldly or indifferent hearts. Many who had taken the veil as a matter of course felt with glad surprise the love of God

awakened in their souls, and looked up with gratitude to Him who, by the workings of His Providence, had withdrawn them from a dangerous world. And, oh, if the cloister had its victims in those days of domestic and regal despotism, who shall number those whom society ruined. If the younger sister was sometimes constrained to take the veil in order to forward the interests of the elder, was the latter on that account the more favoured of the two? Was the vow of marriage extorted from the one, too often against every feeling of the heart, less fearful than that which bound the other to the sanctuary.

Read the lives of the women of the eighteenth century in France, the feverish tales of passion and of sorrow which lie above and under the surface of history, and then venture to say that the child consigned by a weeping mother to some sacred asylum, there to live and there to die in ignorance of the

world's ways, was not more safe and more blest, than those cast into the fiery furnace of the aristocratic society of that day. Many no doubt passed unscathed through the ordeal; holy, virtuous, noble-hearted women as ever lived. Witness those rare models of excellence the wife, the sisters, the daughters of Louis the Fifteenth, but at what a cost of struggle and of suffering, by what an extraordinary amount of grace supported, the Day of Judgment alone will reveal.

While we wish, while we pray, while we hope, that none may ever again enter a convent or a monastery, but out of their own deliberate choice and desire; while we rejoice that the tempest, which God permitted to rage for a while, has dispersed the chaff and sifted the wheat, let us not forget that innocence was sheltered, guilt expiated, holiness of the highest order to be found in the ancient abbeys of France,

and never rashly cast a stone at those venerable walls where Louise de la Vallière repented, and Louise de France died in the odour of sanctity.

“ Where trembling penitents their guilt confess’d,
Where want had succour, and contrition rest,
Where weary hearts from trouble found relief,
Where men in sorrow found repose from grief,
To scenes like these the fainting soul retired,
Revenge and anger in these cells expired,
By pity soothed, remorse lost half her fears,
And softened pride dropp’d penitential tears.¹

On a beautiful autumnal evening, at the hour when the setting sun was throwing a refulgent light on the mullioned windows of the Abbey of Saintes, two sisters were walking arm-in-arm along the wide alley of the convent-garden. The same light which was reflected in the church-windows gilded the foliage of the horse-chesnuts, already turned to a bright yellow by the early frosts, and illuminated

¹ Crabbe.

with its rays the faces of those young girls, one of whom was dressed in the religious garb, the other in the somewhat showy secular costume of the period. Two years had elapsed since they had met, and this was the first time that they had been alone together.

Marguerite Bathilde was the eldest daughter of the Marquis de Biron, who, at the time we are speaking of, had a great many children, and very little fortune. Thanks to the friendship of M. de Bonrepos, and to the dowry which, small as it was, came from the liberality of the Duc de Lauzun, he had contrived to marry his second daughter Françoise to the Marquis de Bonac. The somewhat remarkable beauty of this young lady had been taken into account by the newly-appointed ambassador, who duly estimated the advantage of having so handsome a wife to do the honours of his house at Madrid. But Marguerite, on the

contrary, was decidedly plain, and it seemed at that time an almost inevitable consequence that a nobly-born, portionless, and unattractive young girl should enter a convent. In spite of her apparent thoughtlessness, Mademoiselle de Biron was not slow to perceive that this idea naturally presented itself to the minds of her relations. She had that sort of good sense which makes a person see a subject in its true light without exaggeration one way or the other. In the first place it was evident to her at the time when M. de Bonnac made his proposals to her father for the hand of one of his daughters, that Françoise and not herself had been the one immediately thought of; the fine eyes and graceful figure of the bride doubtless making up in some degree for the absence of a good dowry. After that affair had been brought to a successful termination, it was often mentioned in her presence that considerable

sacrifices had been required and great exertions made in order to establish one daughter in the world according to the exigencies of her rank; that the transaction would have been unsuccessful if several friends of the family had not combined to facilitate matters by offering certain advantages to M. de Bonac, which made up to him for the actual paucity of the dowry which he received with the beautiful Françoise; that it would not be possible for a long time to come to enter upon any similar negotiations. She made no audible comment upon all this, but perfectly understood what it was intended to convey. Some members of her family were then commissioned gently to sound her regarding her vocation. She did not feel, as it happened, the least inclination to the religious life, but her quickness made her instantly perceive that, notwithstanding the extreme mildness of these *hints*, there existed in

her parents' minds a very fixed resolution that the desired result should ensue, and that to offer any opposition to their will would only be to provoke and carry on an unpleasant, and in the end a useless discussion. There was something philosophical in the very levity of her temper, and she resigned herself to her inevitable fate without enthusiasm on the one hand, or any great dejection on the other. She had seen her sister shed many tears at the prospect of exchanging the gaieties of Paris for the dull pomposities of the Spanish Court; several of her friends had died that year of the small-pox, which was making fearful ravages in France, and she acquiesced in the proposal of entering a convent for life, in something of the same spirit with which her brother had submitted to a residence of a few weeks at the Abbey of Saintes. "Well, the convent for a month or two, and *then* Paris," he had exclaimed.

“Well, the convent for thirty or forty years at most, and *then* eternity,” she had ejaculated, and her mind was made up. She wrote as follows to her favourite sister Judithe, on the day when she arrived at this decision :

“I am come to the conclusion, my dearest, that the only important business in life is to prepare for death. It is not very easy to accomplish this in the world, especially if, like me, one happens to possess a head which would easily drive one’s heart into every possible scrape ; just enough folly to mislead, and enough sense to perceive danger when too late. There are special graces attached, we are assured, to every line in life. No doubt but that I shall have great need of them ; Heaven will see to it I hope. The small-pox and various other modes of transit to the next world are greatly in fashion just now ; we have had occasion to

remark it amongst our friends and acquaintance, and upon the whole, my dear, I believe a convent to be a better place in which to wait for my own summons than the Court or the gay world."

It was accordingly with a strange mixture of resignation, levity, and good sense that Marguerite de Biron entered upon her novitiate, and subsequently made her profession at the Abbaye of Chelles, from whence she was, after a short time, removed to the monastery of Saintes, of which her great aunt, Madame de Lauzun, was the abbess. Her high spirits, her unconquerable gaiety, supported her at first under the inevitable trials of her new mode of existence. She took everything lightly, was easily amused; flowers, birds, fancy-work, and a variety of other occupations, together with long and frequent conversations with visitors in the *parloir*, served to occupy and while away the time

and at no one moment of her conventual existence did she feel herself absolutely unhappy. By degrees, the influence of her aunt, who was as wise as she was devout, and as kind to others as she was severe to herself, the sight of the intense happiness which piety can give to those who entirely yield themselves up to its influence, the grace of God working in a heart not ill-disposed, and now removed from the baleful atmosphere of a corrupt society, effected a great change in the young nun. She grew, day by day, more reconciled to that retirement which had at first seemed a banishment, and when Judithe arrived at Saintes, she found her sister in a state of mind which, though it admitted of occasional regrets, distant echoes as it were from the world she had left, was in general one of contented acquiescence in the destiny which Providence had assigned to her.

“Well, my dear girl,” she observed, as

they sat down together on the bench at the end of the gravel-walk which faced the church. "Well, you would have hardly expected to find me so cheerful I think, just two years after that terrible day when we parted with so many tears at the Hotel de Biron."

"You are really glad then to be a nun, sister?" Judithe said, affectionately pressing Marguerite's hand.

"Contented rather than *glad*, I believe, as Madame de la Vallière said in answer to a similar question.¹ Why, really, my little Judithe, the truth is that if one once believes in earnest in a future world, this life seems marvellously short, and eternity marvellously long. It does not then seem of much importance whether we get more or less enjoyment in the meantime. After all, there is Françoise pining away at Madrid, half dying of home, or

¹ Historical.

rather Paris sickness. Truly, it was hardly worth while to marry and be an ambassadress, in order to spend her youth in that way. Only hear what she says to me in her last letter: 'I am sure that if you all knew what a wearisome existence I lead here, you would, if it was only out of compassion, write to me more frequently. I really need to be consoled for living in such a place. Whilst I read your letters I seem to forget all my troubles. I can fancy that we are sitting together in our dear room in Paris; but you may safely reckon that here, out of the twenty-four hours, I am bored to death for ten or twelve at least. M. de Bonac is always busy, and indeed were it not so, you know how grave he is, and how little disposed to converse. I pass my whole days alone in my room. If you were acquainted with the Spanish ladies you would be able to judge how little amusement can be derived

from their conversation, or be surprised that solitude should be preferable to their society.¹ When I think of Paris, Versailles, and Marly, and of all the gaieties and enjoyments which I had a glimpse of before my departure, I cannot help crying like a child, and fancying myself the most unhappy creature in the world.' Well!" observed Marguerite, as she folded up the letter, "certainly there is not much use in marrying for the purpose of arriving at that conclusion. Better to be a nun, even though without a vocation."

"Well, I hardly should say so," Judithe replied, with a doubtful accent. "It can hardly be right to enter the special service of God with only half a heart; or else—"

"Or else? what do you mean by or else?"

"Or else, I should be very much

¹ The Princesse des Ursin's opinion of the Spanish ladies of that day.

tempted to throw myself at the feet of our good lady abbess, and entreat her to receive me as a postulant."

"You don't mean to say that you wish to be a nun?"

"No, no, dear sister, I do not really wish it. I do not think I *could* be a nun."

"Our *wishes* are not always consulted on that subject." There was a shade of bitterness in Marguerite's tone as she made this remark.

"Aye, but in that case," answered Judithe, who had a quick sense of the feelings of others, and the keenest sympathy with them, "in that case submission takes the place of vocation, and has a blessing of its own attached to it."

"The very words my good aunt used when she saw me with a few lingering regrets for all those dear little worldly pleasures which Françoise and myself so much delighted in. Ah! Judithe, I should have

proved rather an unsatisfactory sort of Christian had I remained in Paris. As to you, your steadiness, I suspect, is proof against all its fascinations."

"Not at all proof against anything but what happens not to be a temptation to me, nor ever will be if I know myself. All those amusements which cause such poignant regrets to our dear ambassadress do not seem to me worth a thought."

"But in that case I do not see why you should not become a nun."

"I have already told you my objection. I would not, unless compelled to do so, enter a convent with a divided heart."

"And that portion of your heart which you presume would remain behind, in what way is it to be disposed of may I ask, since it appears that the world lays no claim to it?"

"I am too young to know much as yet about my heart," answered Judithe,

with a slight blush. Strange effect of the imagination which can invest a mere dream, a childish fancy, with the power of exciting emotions only called forth in general by sentiment or passion.

Marguerite observed the deepening colour on her young sister's cheek, and playfully and kindly whispered, as she gently pinched her ear :

“Take care, my little Judithe. When we begin to find out that we possess a heart, it is high time to examine into its secrets.”

“I assure you, Marguerite, that I have not the slightest wish to marry.”

“Indeed ! that is somewhat unfortunate, as from what they write to me from Paris, there is some reason to infer that our parents have been thinking about it.”

“Thinking of my marriage !” exclaimed Judithe, with such a look of alarm that her sister could not help laughing.

“There has certainly been some question of it, my dear child. Something suggested and discussed, but I would not advise you to build upon it.”

“Build upon it,” repeated Judithe, somewhat indignantly, and, rising at the same time, she walked towards the house; stopping, however, occasionally to pull a leaf from the bay-trees, or to smell at the sweetbriar that grew with profusion in the enclosure. At last, stopping short as they approached the door, and apparently engaged in counting the berries of a branch of mountain-ash, she said, in a low voice:

“Marguerite, to whom was it that our parents were thinking of marrying me?”

“I don’t suppose you would ever guess. What if it were M. de Bonrepos. What would you say to that?”

Judithe made a little impatient movement with her shoulder, and Marguerite went on in the same strain.

“He has a beautiful house. He gives excellent dinners. He is quite a patriarch for hospitality.¹ Upon my word, my dear child, you might go further and fare worse. But come, you need not frown so desperately. He was not the bridegroom in question.”

“And who was it then?” Judithe asked, with downcast eyes.

“Somebody that you have never seen; that very possibly you will never see. What does it signify to you to know his name?”

“Why, in spite of the praises you were so kind as to bestow upon me just now, I must plead guilty to a slight amount of feminine curiosity.”

“Well then, my dear child, be it known to you that in the family councils

¹ “Monsieur de Bonrepos est un vrai patriarche pour l’hospitalité.” — *Madame de Maintenon’s Letters.*

in which the destinies of the very noble, and high-born damsels of the house of Gontaut Biron are decided upon, it was proposed, considered, discussed whether Mademoiselle Judithe Charlotte of the said house, should or should not be given in marriage to—come now try once more to guess. I will allow you a hundred, nay, a thousand guesses, as the late Madame de Sévigné said when she announced to her daughter our great uncle's marriage to his grande mademoiselle. You will not commit yourself? Nay? then I suppose you must be told. It was suggested that your fair hand should be bestowed, they never think of our hearts, you know, on our very illustrious and truly respected cousin the Comte Claude Alexandre de Bonneval, deceased in the Place de Grève in the year 1706, and at this present moment lieutenant-general in his Imperial Majesty's service."

Judithe turned very pale, and made a faint exclamation. She found it difficult to speak, her heart was beating so fast. It was not joy, or fear, or even surprise that she felt, but a strange sort of consciousness that her whole life had been possessed by a secret presentiment; that her childish fancy had foreshadowed her future destiny. She almost involuntarily ejaculated the words:

“I knew it would be so.”

“What, you knew it then, you sly little puss? Then why did you keep it so carefully to yourself?”

“It is so very strange, Marguerite.”

“It is you that are strange, my dear girl; but I see how it has been. Your friend the Marquise de Bonneval must have given you a hint, I suppose.”

“No, indeed; she never did. I had never heard a single word about it; and yet—and yet, Marguerite, do you know that

I feel quite certain that it will be as you said."

"Have you had a dream on the subject, you superstitious little thing?"

"A dream! why, yes, I think I have dreamed about it."

"And should you not be afraid of being married to a man so wild, so reckless, so—"

"Hush, hush, dear Marguerite; forgive me for interrupting you, but bear with me when I say that firmly persuaded as I now am that I shall one day be the Comte de Bonneval's wife, I would fain that neither you or anyone else should speak ill of him. You know as well as I do that my wishes will not be consulted on the question. That I shall be desired to accept my cousin as a husband, just as you were recommended to turn your thoughts to the cloister. I shall not be told to weigh his merits, or discuss his faults. I know he

has fine qualities. I know the world has hardly judged him. Excuse my folly, dearest sister, if folly it be, and do not, to me at least, say anything against one whom I feel convinced I shall be one day called upon to honour and to love."

"Just as you please, my dear child. You are one of the most peculiar little beings that it has ever been my lot to meet with, but Heaven forbid that I should do or say anything to vex you. Come along with me now to the chapel. The bell is ringing for vespers. Give me a kiss, my sweet sister. Do not forget to pray for me, and I will pray for you, that you may have strength to meet what I foresee will be the trials of your lot. Believe me, darling, the cloister has its advantages even as regards the present life. *Peace* is not dearly bought even at the price of a few fleeting enjoyments, and none but the wicked could help feeling peaceful *here*."

As she spoke Marguerite lifted the curtain of the chapel door, and with her sister glided into the quiet sanctuary, where the nuns were assembling for vespers. She knelt amongst them in the choir; Judithe with the strangers in the nave.

The darkness was increasing, save where the lights on the altar threw a soft radiance on the pictures and images that adorned the sanctuary; the sweet voices of the nuns chaunting the office, the profound tranquillity within and without spoke of rest, and felt like peace. But Judithe's heart was not as calm as her outward attitude betokened. Motionless, with her head resting on her hands, she prayed that the Divine Will might be done, but she pictured to herself that Will in accordance with her own. She did not ask for happiness, but with a strange kind of enthusiasm accepted future suffering, if only sent in the shape which her imagination

had drawn. That day a change had come over the spirit of her dream. The fancy of her childhood had grown into the vision of her youth.

Seventh Chapter.

"Many a time has banished Norfolk fought
For Jesus Christ, in glorious Christian field,
Streaming the Ensign of the Christian Cross
Against black Pagans, Turks and Infidels."

SHAKESPEARE.

"Thy lot was hard! Thou would'st have pitched
thy tent,

Where some lone streamlet wells from out its urn
Of moss-clad rock, there gladly listening
The quiet music of the Mountain winds;
And tuning thy full soul to such high themes,
As most befit an ardent worshipper
At Nature's inmost shrines.

Thy lot was hard! Within the City pent,
That huge and troublous City, thou did'st walk."

F. W. FABER.

It was indeed true that the strange marriage which Marguerite de Biron had hinted at in her conversation with her sister was actually under discussion. Ne-

gociations to that effect were going on between the parents of Judithe and the Marquise de Bonneval. The difficulty of finding suitable alliances for his almost portionless daughters had induced the Marquis de Biron to use his interest with the Regent, in whose good graces he held a distinguished place, in favour of M. de Bonneval, on condition that in the event of the count's return to France, he should marry his daughter Judithe, thus securing to her a title and a position in the world suitable to her rank and birth.¹

The Marquise de Bonneval, in the hopes

¹ Whether from a yearning after his native country or the wish to be whitewashed from what stood in the light of a stain on his character, or some idea of playing the spy, and thus paying his court to the Emperor, he (Bonneval) sought to obtain letters of abolition, that should enable him to appear again in France. Biron offered to employ his credit with the Regent in his behalf, on condition that he should marry one

that a marriage with so pretty and accomplished a person, would be an inducement to her son to remain in France, eagerly accepted the offer, and pledged herself on the subject without very particularly consulting him, or at least without waiting for his reply.

It was certainly an extraordinary favour that the friends of M. de Bonneval were asking at the hands of the Regent; viz., that a man who had deserted from the French army, and who had chiefly gained his reputation by serving the enemies of his country, should be at once reinstated in all his civil rights, and whitewashed from a crime always considered as the most unpardonable that a soldier and a citizen can commit. The thing would have been impossible during the preceding reign, but of his portionless daughters. The letters of abolition were promised, and the marriage resolved upon.—*Memoirs of St. Simon.*

several circumstances had now combined to pave the way for such a conclusion.

The Marquis de Biron and one of his sons were amongst the Duke of Orleans' especial favourites. The Abbé Dubois, that prince's wily and unprincipled confidant, was one of Bonneval's most intimate friends, and ready to lend a helping hand to any scheme in his behalf. At the same time the Comte de Luc, French ambassador at Vienna, won over by the charm of his manners and the agreeableness of his conversation, exerted himself to the utmost to forward his return to Paris. He lost no opportunity, whether by means of letters, or in conversation with French travellers, to extol the count's valour, his abilities and his talents; the affection he had always preserved for his country, the chivalrous defence of the late King when slandered by his enemies; and the gallantry of his exploits against the Turks;

adverting at the same time to the high esteem in which he was held by Prince Eugene, who was himself at that time in great favour with the French Court, where every effort was made to conciliate him.

Bonneval's recent exploits at the Battle of Peterwaradin had thrown a certain prestige around his name. There existed a strong feeling of curiosity in the public mind regarding a man once so decried and now so lauded.

In the Council of Regency, where the question of his return was brought under consideration, no very delicate sense of honour prevailed; and those who, in the name of justice and morality, protested against so fatal a precedent, were in general met by open sneers, and on the whole experienced very little sympathy.¹

¹ The Regent submitted the question of Bonneval's letters of pardon to the Council of Regency, and wished its members to signify their approval.

The Marquise de Bonneval, who had discerned from afar the threatening cloud, at first small as a man's hand, which was one day to overcast the whole of her idolised son's destiny, was likewise not slow, when the storm had set in, and the dark, heavy clouds of shame and disgrace had gathered round his head, in detecting the quarter from whence light might one day arise. Her quick-sighted perception was never at fault. It had suggested to her the means of enlisting in his favour the all-powerful interest of the Birons. She had fixed her attention on her cousin's favourite child, the little girl he so fondly loved, and whom he could not endure the idea of

I could not be so accommodating, and voted against the proposal, speaking strongly and at length of all the objections that exist to granting them in the case of a crime of this description. I was not quite the only one, but very few indeed made any opposition, and they spoke but feebly against it.—*Memoirs of St. Simon.*

consigning, whether with or against her will, to the cloister. When she discovered, to her surprise, that the young Judithe had conceived a romantic admiration for her son, she neglected no means of fostering and exciting this childish predilection, which she conjectured might throw some little weight in the scale, when her projects came to be matured. With a hard, but at the same time impassioned perspicuity, she had watched the progress of events, domestic, military, and political, the fluctuations of court favour and court intrigue, the feelings of a father's heart, and the workings of a young imagination. When the news of M. de Chamillart's disgrace reached her ears, she betrayed no extravagant exultation, but her light, piercing eyes sparkled with unwonted animation, she said to herself: "So far so good," and then resumed the attitude of patient but keen watchfulness, which had become habitual to her.

She took notice in the same manner of the tears of the Marquise de Biron when her eldest daughter took the veil, and of the fond look of love which her husband turned upon their third daughter, as she stood by her sister's side. When the first rumours of her son's exploits resounded throughout Europe, her bosom heaved with emotion, but no sign of joy escaped her. When the aged King expired, and Massillon broke the silence of that awful death-scene by those six solemn words, pronounced before the corpse of Louis le Grand, "God alone is great, my brethren," when Judithe wept in sympathy with her maternal griefs, blushed at the name of the Comte de Bonneval, or turned pale at the recital of the dangers he was running, still the same deep, silent self-gratulation rose in that mother's heart. Cold in its passion, stern in its intensity, reckless in its devotion to one single object, she saw every obsta-

cle giving way before the fearful resoluteness of her will, and pursued her end utterly regardless of the sufferings of others, even as the Car of Juggernaut, bearing onward the idol to whom all mankind, if necessary, is to be offered up in sacrifice. There is, indeed, a fearful strength in passionate affection when it rules supreme in a heart unsoftened by religion, unhallowed by duty.

Judithe remained for some time at Saintes; peaceful and even happy were the days that she spent in that tranquil abode. The life that she led there was congenial to her tastes and her inclinations. Her brother often took her out driving and riding with him, and they visited together the various picturesque spots of the adjoining country. His banishment was drawing to a close. In a few weeks he was to return to Paris, to be married to Mademoiselle de Gramont. He had taken a great fancy to his young sister. The *finesse* and originality

of her remarks were very much to his taste, and she had tact enough never to force upon him reflections which would have been uncongenial to his thoroughly worldly tone of mind. Judithe was very sensible on all such points as did not relate to her affections, and like those insane persons who seem to be perfectly reasonable on all subjects save the particular one regarding which their minds are at fault, she never betrayed in the presence of the worldly-wise that keen sensibility and somewhat romantic disposition which was likely to affect her own peace, but which was never suffered to be troublesome to others.

M. de Bonrepos was faithful to his promise, and took up his abode for some days at the Hostelry of Saintes, but he did not find the little lady of his thoughts as often at the receipt of custom as he had expected, and got tired of asking for

her in vain at the *parloir* of the convent. She liked to wander in the garden, to sit reading in the shade of the old horse-chesnut trees, whose trembling and gilded leaves were falling down in yellow showers at the bidding of the autumnal winds. At stated hours she would repair to the cell of the venerable Madame de Lauzun, on whose meek countenance was stamped that holy, happy expression peculiar to those who belong to earth through all its charities, to Heaven through all its graces; that combines the woman's with the angel's tenderness. A sunset-sky, an evening hour in summer, a mist on the waveless-sea, all that this earth can shadow forth of beauty and of peace, does but faintly typify the divine serenity of those who sit at their Lord's feet, and in whose joys a stranger intermeddles not. No wonder then that the remembrance of Madame de Lauzun's cell, of her face, of her gentle

words remained as a vision of peace in the mind of the young girl, if in the course of her future life she often reverted to the lessons she had then received. So many impressions are made upon the soul in early youth, at the time with so little result that they seem scarcely to sink below the surface, but the lapse of years, and sorrow, and memory deepen the stamp and bring into relief what seemed all but effaced. Tell the young then, and weary not of telling them, that this life *as an end* is darker and sadder yet than philosophers have said, or than poets have sung; that it is empty as a dream, and wearisome as an often-told tale; but that as a means *to an end*, it is great and glorious, full of meaning and of hope; great in its trials, glorious in its conquests, hopeful in its strife. For a while they will not listen; they may refuse to believe, or to heed the voice of the charmer, charm he never so

wisely. The seed will fall on the road-side and lie there, it may be for years, unwatered by the dews of Heaven ; but when the torrents are let loose, and the rain falls on the hard soil, that seed may grow at last, those words may bring forth fruit. The bread cast upon the waters may once feed the hungry soul, cheated of the happiness it had looked for at the world's hands. The village-church of Biron, the cell of the Abbess of Saintes, were landmarks in Judithe's life, to which she often reverted in hours of bitter trial. It is good for the memory to have such resting-places in the past. Such thoughts have often stood between a human soul and despair.

On her return to Paris, in the autumn of the year 1716, Judithe found herself in some respects in a new position with regard to her family. Of her two elder sisters, the one was married, and the other had become a nun. She took in conse-

quence an elder daughter's place in the home of her childhood. Her father, who had always been very fond of his little Judithe, made much of her now that M. de Gontaut had pronounced her to be clever, and that M. de Bonrepos went about saying that she promised to be as wise as Madame de Maintenon and as charming as Madame de Caylus. The Marquise de Biron, who was not used to show much tenderness to her children, treated her at this time with unwonted indulgence, and introduced her into the society in which she had hitherto appeared only as a child. Madame d'Urfé and her intimate friend Madame de St. Simon were much struck with the quiet self-possession of her manner, the originality of her thoughts, and the facility with which she expressed herself; they took a great deal of notice of her, and the Duc de St. Simon sometimes vouchsafed to address a few words to the young lady whom

his incomparable wife so highly esteemed.

Judithe was not at all shy; a very modest person, unless constitutionally subject to that infirmity, is seldom much troubled with an excess of timidity. Never wishing to show off, or caring about what would be thought or said of her, she never felt anxious to please except where her affections were concerned.

M. de Lauzun, whose bitter and satirical temper kept his whole family in fear of his sharp sayings, and who, at the same time that he conferred many substantial benefits on his niece Madame de Biron, invariably aimed at her the arrows of his most cutting sarcasms,¹ softened to the little de Gontaut, as he always called Judithe.²

¹ M. de Lauzun, at the same time that he was perpetually conferring benefits on his niece, Madame de Biron, always showed a particular dislike to her.—*Memoirs of St. Simon*.

² Lauzun, was rather fond of Biron, but not at all of his wife, who was, however, his niece and

This great uncle of hers was a perpetual subject of wonderment to his enthusiastic and inexperienced niece. She could in no wise identify in her own mind the harsh and irritable old man, whose domestic life was painfully unheroic, with her idea of him when he was the gallant Lauzun, the object of so many romantic passions, the hero of so many romantic adventures. The numerous portraits of the grande mademoiselle, which were ostentatiously displayed in his apartments, often set her dreaming about that impassioned and imprudent woman whose existence was so cruelly embittered by her own follies and the sins of others. It was such a strange page in the book of life, the history of that eccentric old uncle of hers, whose savage pride and ill-humour made him a his principal heir. He thought her very mercenary, and her manners were insupportable to him. —*Memoirs of St. Simon.*

sort of bugbear to his relations and acquaintances, while at the same time the goodness and generosity of his character led him to do all sorts of kind things for the very persons whom in his angry moods he was wont to browbeat and insult. She would turn her eyes from the picture of his fair-haired, stately and all but royal wife, to the weazened features and bent figure of the old duke, and marvel at the passion which had wrought such wild work in the heart and the destiny of Gaston's¹ princely daughter. She would picture to herself also those long years of captivity spent in the fortress of Pignerol, and the tragi-comical interviews between Lauzun, the recently discarded favourite, and Fouquet, the long-banished minister, who, ignorant of the events that had occurred since his imprisonment, and of the extra-

¹ Gaston, Duke of Orleans, brother of Louis the Thirteenth.

ordinary romance of his new companion's life, listened to his reminiscences as to the ravings of a maniac, and at last petitioned the authorities that he might no longer be obliged to associate with a madman.¹ Then, again, a later page in his eventful history had a peculiar charm in her eyes; the share he took in the escape to France of England's Queen; the beautiful, the courageous, the noble-hearted Mary Beatrice. How often Judithe longed to speak to him of that night of gallant daring, and of breathless suspense.² Sometimes she would venture on a timid allusion to the

¹ Historical.

² M. de Lauzun, then an exile in England in consequence of his marriage with the grande mademoiselle, undertook to convey Mary Beatrice, the wife of James the Second, and her infant son to France, when it was no longer considered safe for them to remain in England. He conducted this perilous escape with so much courage and presence of mind that the English Queen always remem-

subject, but her heart sank within her at the light, jeering tone in which he spoke of those moments, fraught to her with so thrilling an interest. She could not bear the satirical remarks which he always blended with his recollections of the past. With her somewhat Quixotic love of glory, she did so long to admire one nearly allied to her by blood, and who to her had always been kind; but there was nothing in him that gave any pretext for enthusiasm. His habit of sneering at the feelings of others and at his own, chilled every emotion, and stung her to the heart.

One day at a great dinner, where he was entertaining, as was his wont, the most distinguished personages of the Court, he remembered with gratitude the service he had rendered her. Through her intercession he was restored to Louis the Fourteenth's good graces, and to the enjoyment of his forfeited possessions and dignities.

he gave a ridiculous account of that memorable journey from London to Calais, and turned the whole thing into a joke. Happening at that instant to look at Judithe, he saw her tearing to pieces, leaf by leaf, the finest rose of the nosegay which he had just presented to her.

“How now, mademoiselle de Gontaut!” he cried out in his sharp voice. “What are you doing with those flowers? Are you so wealthy or such a spendthrift that you can afford to destroy in that way the presents that are made to you. I protest that you are not your mother’s own daughter; Madame la Marquise de Biron would have sold that bouquet sooner than have torn it to pieces.”

“I beg you ten thousand pardons, my dear uncle,” Judithe answered with a deep blush, “but I fancied I was only following the example you had just given me.”

“In what respect, I should like to know, my most dutiful niece?”

“Only that you seemed to me just now to be wantonly spoiling by a jest the fairest flower of your life.”

The old duke shrugged his shoulders, but the answer did not seem altogether to displease him.

Eighth Chapter.

“And in thy love I’ll live, and in thy love I’ll die. — IRENE.

“Yet was there light around her brow,
A holiness in those dark eyes,
Which showed though wand’ring earthward now,
Her spirit’s home was in the skies.” — MOORE.

THERE is a sort of instinct which binds together by a secret sympathy those in whose characters certain points of resemblance exist, even though in other respects, age for instance, or refinement, or ability, they may be as dissimilar as possible. That very dissimilarity is sometimes an element of attachment. We do not often see persons equals or nearly so in excellence, and in powers of mind, devoted to each other

in the same degree as those who are united by an affectionate reverence on the one side, and a protecting tenderness on the other. Friendships founded on intellectual sympathy and similarity of tastes easily subside, and sometimes in a rapid manner ; whereas such as are based on congeniality of feeling, if it be but on *one* essential point, survive separations, apparent estrangement, and maintain their ground against the most adverse circumstances.

When Mademoiselle de Gontaut first entered into society she had occasion to see a variety of persons with whom she would converse with interest, and associate with pleasure, but there was one quality which she seldom met with in others, which she eminently possessed herself, for which there is no name in the French language, and that is *earnestness*. Can it be that it rarely exists amongst French people ? It may be so. If earnest at all they

are in general more than earnest; they are heroic. The noble hearts, the devoted spirits that form in our day a glorious phalanx of combatants in the cause of religion and virtue in that extraordinary country, that live and die at their posts, whether in the home-struggle with vice and impiety, or on the distant shores where hundreds and thousands of its children are daily carrying on their ceaseless labours for the propagation of the Faith, they live with a glorious recklessness, they die with a sublime indifference. A recklessness of all human hopes, fears, and interests, an indifference which none but the pure in heart can feel on the confines of eternity. A Frenchman can hardly be earnest unless he is holy. Englishmen are earnest about everything. Nobly earnest about the public good; profitably earnest about money; tiresomely earnest about trifles. Be that as it may

earnestness is no doubt a quality which those who are endowed with miss painfully in others. Its absence is felt even where other merits exist and are acknowledged, and sympathy in this respect forms the link of many an unequal friendship, of many a life-long intimacy. It was not in the world to which she was now introduced that Judithe was likely to meet examples of those heroic and exalted virtues which were exhibited here and there even at that corrupt and frivolous epoch. What met her eyes, what pained her ears, was the universal sneer, the unceasing jest which blighted with its delicate but fatal touch every subject, human and divine. This was the great trial of earnest hearts. This it was that made the young Duchesse de Bourgogne exclaim in innocent astonishment:

“In this country they laugh at everything!”

This it was that roused the indignation of the mother of the Regent, the fierce, honest, true-hearted German, whose brutality was almost refreshing by dint of being genuine. No wonder then that a sensitive, enthusiastic girl, whose soul was tuned to a different key, should have felt pained at the discordance between her own feelings and the sentiments of the majority of those she lived with; that she should have felt powerfully attracted towards any individuals, however different from herself in age or in mind, in whose hearts there were chords which made them vibrate at times in unison with her own. Why does she meet, for instance, with a cordial embrace that middle-aged, homely Madame de Cavois, in whose face there is no beauty, in whose step no grace, in whose manner no dignity, in whose conversation no point. She is absent when spoken to; her eyes wander round the room like those of

an enamoured girl watching for her lover's approach; and soon her face is beaming with joy, for the handsome stout captain of the King's Guard has arrived, and smiled as he passed her, and she worships him now, after fifteen years of marriage, with the same ardent, impassioned, simple-minded adoration with which she has loved him since the day that from her old paternal castle in Brittany, she came to the French Court to be the Queen's maid-of-honour.

Mademoiselle de Coëtlogon's passion had been the jest, the amusement, the pastime of the Court. It was undisguised, unreserved, unrequited! but in its sincerity, simplicity, and purity too touching to be derided even there. The princes laughed, the princesses sympathised, the King himself took an interest in the success of that true love which did not bid fair to run smooth, for nothing could be more indifferent than

M. de Cavois, more insensible to the affection he had inspired, and he was rash and thoughtless withal, and fell into disgrace with the Sovereign, and it so happened, one day, that he was sent to the Bastille. Then an extraordinary event took place at Court, so strange, so unprecedented that the very walls of the royal Palace must have quivered at the sight.

The Grand Monarque was at dinner, and the household were waiting upon him; it was Mademoiselle de Coëtlogon's business to take part in the ceremonial, but, lo and behold! the incensed maid-of-honour absolutely refused to wait on his Majesty, and exclaimed in an indignant voice:

“He does not deserve that I should!”

And, moreover, when the King sought to appease her, she burst into tears, and threatened to scratch his face! No apologies could soothe her, no remonstrances

avail. Nothing would induce her to speak to him during the whole time of M. de Cavois' imprisonment. It did not prove a long one, he was soon restored to the Court, and Louis le Grand to the maid-of-honour's good graces.

A few months later the Queen announced at her *circle* Mademoiselle de Coëtlogon's marriage to M. de Cavois. Great was the satisfaction caused by this event, many sincere congratulations addressed to the bride. She had been so patient and humble in her love, she was so humble and so grateful in her happiness. A more devoted wife was never seen; her husband was content to be adored, and treated her with kindness.¹

To certain natures certain sights are refreshing. Years afterwards Judithe would watch with emotion the look of love that

¹ These details are strictly historical. St. Simon relates the anecdote at length.

beamed on Madame de Cavois' face, and if she smiled at the stories which others told of her simple affection and unshaken constancy, a tear was sometimes brushed away under cover of that smile. Madame de Caylus or Madame de Simiane's lovely faces did not possess the same charm in her eyes; and yet in both the grace of sensibility was not wanting. True, but to the earnest there is no attraction like earnestness, and no strong and lifelong feeling can exist in natures wholly devoid of it.

One day that with a party of her relations and of their friends Mademoiselle de Gontaut was walking through the Gardens of Versailles, the Maréchal d'Uxelles, one of the ministers, conversing with her brother the vicomte, on whose arm she was leaning, they met in the broad alley which faces the Bath of Neptune a large society, amongst whom were several persons of M. de Gontaut's acquaintance. As it had been

with his books at Biron, so it was with his friends at Paris. There were many amongst them whom he did not care to introduce to his sister, but on this occasion he could not avoid stopping to exchange civilities with the ladies of that gay company. Madame de Parabère was there in all her loveliness and her folly. The youthful Madame du Deffand, whose wit was even more remarkable than her beauty. By her side was M. Arouet de Voltaire, who divided his time and his flatteries between the Parisian society, over which he was beginning to preside, and the princely *salons* of Sceaux and of Anet, where the Duchesse du Maine was gathering around her poets, wits, and artists, to swell the train of her admirers, and minister to her passion for powerful display and literary amusements.¹

The individuals who composed this little court shared their days between intellectual pursuits and

M. d'Argental, M. Pont de Veyle, the young d'Alembert, and many others, were carrying into those stately scenes, which seemed to bear the stamp of another era, the light, free, audacious spirit of the day. It rung in their voices, it flashed in their eyes, it seemed to hang about them like a noxious vapour. Oh! how dreadful it was, that moral pestilence which was invading that society with a rapid and fatal force, first getting into their heads, and then turning their hearts to stone.

luxurious indolence. The madrigals of M. de Saint Aulaire, or the epistles of Chaulieu, the Phillipics of Lagrange Chancel, fragments of Arouet's *Œdipe*, that bitter satire of the Regent's profligacy; M. du Maine's translation of the Cardinal de Polignac's anti *Lucrece*; and other productions since buried in oblivion, ministered to their daily amusement. The evenings were devoted to the card-table, to dancing, theatrical performances, and *fêtes* in the open air of the duchesse's fantastical order of the Honey Bee.—*Woman in France in the Eighteenth Century.*

Judithe de Gontaut, between her dissipated brother, and the profligate d'Uxelles, amidst her fortune-seeking parents and her pleasure-hunting relatives, seemed indeed a pure flower standing amongst rank weeds; but in the party just described there was to be seen a perhaps still more striking contrast; a being whose heart bore, if possible, a still wider dissimilarity to those of her companions; if, indeed, the individuals who composed Madame du Deffand's society (who sixty years later, on the verge of the grave, acknowledged to Madame de Genlis, that she had never had the least affection for anyone) could be said to have hearts at all.

In the withering atmosphere of that infidel *coterie*, at the outset of the eighteenth century, a child was brought up who had first seen the light under an Eastern sky, in a Circassian Palace. Her father was a prince, and in one of those sudden revolu-

tions so common in Asia, he and his whole family had been massacred, except the infant Ayesha or Aissé, as the French pronounced her name.

The helpless little child, beautiful as a poet's dream, was exposed for sale in the slave-market, at Constantinople, and many of those who passed to-and-fro that day remarked her loveliness, and wondered what her fate would be. It was a strange one; strange as if:

"The stormy winds which do the Lord's bidding," had borne away from some Indian forest the wildest and fairest of its blossoms, and had set it down in a hot-bed, in the midst of a noisy and tumultuous city.

A Frenchman saw the little Ayesha, and bought her at her master's price. She was conveyed to Paris, and entrusted to the

care of M. de Ferriol's sister-in-law, a lady who held at that time a distinguished, but neither honourable nor enviable position in society.

The little Circassian grew up amidst the *roués* of the Regent's Court, the wits of that profane and lawless epoch. She heard every tongue employed in blaspheming, every hand raised against its Maker. Every effort was made to pervert that fair creature. Around her were women without virtue and without shame; men without honour or feeling. Her own protectress sought to drive her into sin; almost every friend she had, to laugh her out of virtue. She was the most beautiful woman in Paris. The light of her Eastern eyes was :

“Wondrous strong, but lovely in its strength.”

And the melancholy sweetness of her

smile was such as had never been seen in the laughing "*Pays de France*."

Her benefactor, if such he could be called, nobles, princes, wits, and the Regent himself, were at her feet, but they pleaded, and argued, and persecuted her in vain. Untaught, as far as religion and virtue were concerned, she had an instinctive sense of both. She loathed vice, she abhorred deceit, and never did her eyes or her lips belie her feelings.

When Mademoiselle de Gontaut saw the young Ayesha walking by the side of Madame du Deffand, she guessed that that was the Circassian girl of whom her brothers were so often talking. She had heard her story, and had felt an interest in her fate, and now a kind of sympathy, which she could hardly have defined, sprung up in her heart, as her eyes met those dark, soft, mournful ones, so different

in their expression from any she had ever seen.

They stood next each other for a few moments, while their respective companions were conversing. Judithe had in her hand a large nosegay of violets. She timidly offered it to the beautiful girl, who in return gave her a white rose which she took out of her bosom.

"The sweetest of flowers," Ayesha said, as she bent her lovely head over the violets.

"The purest of flowers," Judithe murmured, as she fastened the white rose in her dress.

Such was their brief colloquy, and they parted, seldom to meet again, and that only by some casual occurrence. But long after those violets had lost their perfume, and that white rose had shed its petals, the interest which had been

awakened in both their hearts continued to exist. Their destinies were widely different.

Over Ayesha's life a dark cloud passed. She had scorned the homage of princes, the allurements of fortune; there was that in her soul which revolted from the meaner and coarser forms of guilt. She was good and pure from instinct, not from principle, for none had been imparted to her. She had been baptised in her childhood, but never instructed in religion. She had not realised that sin was an offence against God. She stood like a fair lily on the surface of a dark and stagnant pool, at the mercy of the winds and the treacherous waters beneath; and when one who loved her devotedly and whose feelings and character were of a far nobler stamp than those she had hitherto known, came in her way, she had

no power wherewith to resist the weakness of her own heart. She fell like Louise de la Vallière; like her she repented, but her fall was more excusable, her sacrifice more generous. There are tears that can wash away the deepest stains; efforts that can redeem such falls, and her's were of that nature.

One friend she had in that great city, where her lot had been cast amidst the vicious and the impious. One who feared God and loved virtue. This woman,¹ with unwearied perseverance, and noble courage, spoke the truth to Ayesha; and disturbed her false happiness with impressive warnings. She spoke to her of sin, as Christians speak; she spoke to her of God, as Christians feel. She taught her what life is,—its blessing and

¹ Madame Calandrini.

its curse; awakened faith in that not utterly-perverted heart, which had sinned through ignorance, and which sighed after truth; pleaded with her the cause of her own soul, nor did she plead in vain. The sacrifice was made, the victory was won.

Secure of the attachment of her lover, for the Chevalier d'Aydie worshipped the very ground she trod upon, the tender-hearted Circassian girl, after struggles which laid the seeds of the illness which brought her to the grave, renounced that love which was dearer to her than life, and offered up her anguish at the feet of Him whom she had been taught to defy, but whom in her secret heart she had ever adored.

So touching was her repentance, so fervent her piety, that her lover, to his honour be it recorded, never sought to

overcome her resolution, when he had once ascertained on what grounds it was founded. He offered to marry her; implored her to consent to their union, but Ayesha steadfastly refused. It would have been the ruin of his earthly prospects, and if her love could have made up to him for the loss of all else, it would not, she felt, have blest him long. Her health had always been delicate, and the sufferings she had gone through had hastened its decline.

When too ill and weak to go to a church she ardently desired to see a priest, but Madame de Ferriol absolutely refused to admit one into her house. It is one of those curious facts with which history and biography abound, that the persons who contrived to elude her impious orders, and to procure for the dying girl the blessing of absolu-

tion, were Madame de Parabère and Madame du Deffand.

Such was the life of Ayesha, the Circassian slave.¹ Was it strange that, in its various phases, it excited the interest of one who had seen her, as Judithe had done, in the bloom of her youth, and been struck with the artless innocence of her face and the noble expression of her countenance; that she breathed a sigh when Ayesha erred; that her eyes were raised to heaven with gratitude when she repented; that they were filled with tears when she died; and that, often, when musing over that singular destiny, she felt the deep meaning of the words

¹ This short sketch of Mademoiselle Aissé's life, as this Circassian girl was called in Paris, is drawn from Miss Kavanagh's work, "Woman in France during the Eighteenth Century."

that: "There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that does penance, than over ninety and nine just persons who do not need repentance."

Ninth Chapter.

“Kept pure till then from other ties,
My heart e’en ere it saw those eyes,
Seemed doomed to thee. — MOORE.

“Careful hours with time-deforming hand,
Have written strange defeatures in her face.”

SHAKESPEARE.

“Congenial Hope! Thy passion-kindling power
How bright, how strong in youth’s untroubled hour!

ROGERS.

Two or three months after her return to Paris, Judithe was invited by the Duc and Duchesse de Lauzun to spend a few days with them at their pretty country-house at Passy, where, as the Duc de St. Simon informs us, the most agreeable and

refined portion of the Parisian society almost daily assembled.

For some time past the Marquise de Bonneval had been in the country, and not a word had been said to Judithe of the projected marriage. Her cousin was, however, often mentioned in the course of conversation, and the probability of his return to Paris discussed with more or less satisfaction, according to the views or the sentiments of the speakers.

She never could hear his name without emotion, nor did she ever prove for an instant unfaithful to her secret worship of the ideal hero, with which her imagination had identified him. Gay, attractive, light-hearted, full of confidence in a happy future (for what young girl of eighteen ever doubted that her life was to be a happy one), endowed with beauty and with wit, Judithe never felt the least desire for admiration, or anything but the

most perfect indifference for worldly success. To await in silence the moment which she felt certain would arrive, when her hand would be placed in that long-dreamed of stranger's hand; to prepare herself for a destiny which her young enthusiasm deemed to be the brightest that earth could offer to her, was her sole thought in the midst of a society where feeling and romance were strangely at discount. Pure as the virgin snow on the mountain crest, apparently as cold as the sheet of ice that covers the deep waters of a lake, which the sun will one day shine upon, and the breeze stir up to its very depths, there was no outward token of the impassioned feelings, the ardent impulses, and the strong faith which were lying buried in the inmost recesses of her soul.

In one of those fanciful distributions of names, which was a common pastime in those days, the guests of the Duc and

Duchesse de Lauzun, unanimously bestowed on Mademoiselle de Gontaut the appellation of "Silence," and there must have been some instinctive sense of the peculiarity we speak of, which alone could explain the choice of that designation for one who conversed more readily and more agreeably than most young persons of her age.

When Madame de Nogaret presented her niece to her intimate friend Madame de Caylus, and told her laughing that it was "their little Silence" that she was introducing to her notice, the beautiful eyes of that lady fixed themselves on the countenance of the young girl, she gazed upon it for an instant and then said, with her peculiar and most winning smile :

"A most expressive Silence indeed."

Upon hearing her mention the great desire that she felt to see Madame de Maintenon, who was then living in the strict-

est retirement, seldom admitting to her presence even her greatest friends, she proposed, with a kindness that surprised and enchanted Judithe, to carry her with her to St. Cyr the first time she went there.

The widow of Louis the Fourteenth graciously received Mademoiselle de Gontaut, whom her old friend, M. de Bonrepos, had often named to her as the most sensible young person he was acquainted with, and observing, probably without displeasure, the timid but eager look of interest with which she listened to every word that dropped from her lips, she patted her on the cheek, and said, with a smile :

“My dear child, you are as curious about the old woman as the Czar of all the Russias ;” and then she related with that graceful choice of words, and that charm of manner which so particularly belonged to her, the particulars of Peter the Great’s

visit to St. Cyr, and the mute astonishment which his face expressed, when having pulled aside the curtains of her bed, he stood gazing upon the faded features which he had insisted upon seeing as one out of the many curiosities he was resolved to visit.¹

“Is not my aunt adorable?” exclaimed Madame de Caylus, as they were driving back from St. Cyr to Paris.

“More admirable than adorable, I should say,” was Judithe’s reply. “Idolatry is an unreasonable worship; how then could Madame de Maintenon, the very perfection of reason, be the object of it?”

Madame de Caylus smiled and said:

“Fifteen years ago I should not have been so willing to make you acquainted with her. Such an answer would have raised you to the highest point in her

¹ Madame de Maintenon’s Letters.

esteem, and I was exceedingly jealous of those who were in favour with my aunt. The Duchesse de Noailles, Mademoiselle d'Aumale and myself were always disputing as to the rank we held in her affection, and Her Royal Highness the Duchesse de Bourgogne would playfully join in those contestations. How well I remember the childish, winning grace with which she exclaimed, one day when my aunt would not employ her as she did us, to write letters for her, "Is not Adélaïde de Savoie good gentlewoman enough to serve you?"¹ She was the beloved one of her heart that charming young duchess, and she has never recovered her loss.² As to me, I have

¹ Adélaïde de Savoie n'est elle pas assez bonne demoiselle pour vous servir?"

² Madame Elizabeth Charlotte de Baviere gives the following account of the deaths of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne:

"The Dauphine had had her fortune told in Italy when she was quite a child (she was only

loved my aunt with what you truly called an unreasonable worship. I see her but very seldom now. St. Cyr absorbs all her thoughts and affections. Still, if she was eleven years old when she was made over to the French Court), and amongst other things it was predicted to her that she would die at the age of twenty-seven. She used often to speak of this prophecy. One day she said to the Dauphin, 'The time is drawing near ; I shall soon die. As you will be obliged in your position to marry again, do tell me who you will choose for your wife.' He replied, 'I trust that God will not punish me so severely as to make you die before me, but if such a misfortune was to befall me, I should certainly not marry again, for I could never live under such a loss, and before the end of eight days I should follow you to the grave.' It happened as he said. He died seventeen days after his wife, and from no other cause but grief. What I tell you is a matter of fact. As to the Dauphine, while she was still in good health, she used to say, 'I must make the most of my happiness. I shall not enjoy it long. I shall die this year.' The King, Louis the Fourteenth, loved that little Dauphine better than anything in the world."

to die before me there would be a sad blank in my life."

"Ah!" exclaimed Judithe, "life can scarcely be a blank, I should think, when the book of memory is closely written."

"You are but just entering upon life, my dear child, and can know nothing as yet of the sufferings which memory can inflict."

"Nothing through experience," replied the young girl, "and yet I feel persuaded that it must be better to have known happiness for ever so short a time, and then to live upon that remembrance, than to go through a life with a vague yearning for what the unsatisfied heart has never obtained."

"I am not so sure of that, my dear Judithe. The unwritten page is still open to fresh impressions, but when once it has been used—"

"Then we can commit the writing

to memory, and leave the paper to its fate."

Madame de Caylus gently stroked her young companion's cheek, and said:

"Believe me, sweet one, write in pencil the first pages of your life. Let the marks be such as can easily be rubbed out. It is often better to obliterate the first sketch and to begin afresh, than to have such deep characters stamped upon our hearts, that we must needs carry them with us to the grave."

"Do you indeed think so?" Judith thoughtfully ejaculated, trying the while to read on Madame de Caylus's lovely but faded face whether the advice she was giving her, and which she felt no inclination to follow, was the result of a natural levity of character, or of a deeply-wounded sensibility. Her anxious gaze was met only by one of those enchanting smiles which had made

Madame de Maintenon write nearly forty years before, "The little de Murçay is really quite charming," and which now illuminated her face with a light which set at defiance the traces of age and of sorrow.

At last the Marquise de Bonneval returned from the country. Judithe was anxious to call upon her, and entreated Madame de Lauzun, at whose villa, at Passy, she was still staying, to take her for that purpose in her carriage to Paris, where she was going to spend a few hours.

It was in the early days of November, a heavy mist, which the sun was vainly striving to dissipate, hung over the Bois de Boulogne, and gave a melancholy aspect to the straight long alleys, through which they were passing. Madame de Lauzun pointed to the trees, which were fast losing their leaves, and said with a sigh :

"How fast time slips away ! Another

year almost gone by. You are quite old enough, my dear, to be married. Don't you think so yourself?"

"Ah! that concerns my parents, not me," Judithe answered, with a somewhat melancholy smile; and in a certain sense what she said was true.

"If I am not mistaken they have something of that kind in view," Madame de Lauzun said.

"Indeed! madame," Judithe answered, with a slight blush.

"By the way, my dear Judithe, you will have to congratulate Madame de Bonneval on the approaching return of her son. A message from Prince Eugene to the Regent seems to have settled the matter. The Duc de St. Simon and consequently my good sister are in a state of patriotic indignation on the subject; but M. de Lauzun views it in quite a different light. He looks forward with great satis-

faction to M. de Bonneval's arrival, and was almost as angry last night with those who grumbled at it as on the unlucky day of the review."¹

“Oh, do tell me, my dear aunt, what happened on that occasion. I was obliged to devote myself to the entertainment of Mesdemoiselles de Gramont and de Colbert, and though I could see that a storm was getting up at the other end of the *salon*, the cause of it has remained a mystery to me. Only I saw that Madame de Poitiers was weeping; that you looked kind and gracious as ever, but anxious and perturbed, and that my good uncle was in such a passion that I hardly ventured to look in his direction. As to M. de St. Simon he seemed to be as usual employing one of his eyes in watching and the other in judging the

¹ All that follows is described in St. Simon's Memoirs.

unhappy objects of his scrutiny. Pray excuse me, my dear aunt, I have really a great respect for M. le Duc de St. Simon, but you must allow me not to love him as much as his charming wife."

"You are a very saucy young lady, and quite equal to taking a leaf out of my brother-in-law's book, and making as active a use of your two young eyes as he does of his two old ones. Well, then, my dear child, if you must know the truth, it was all my fault, my very great fault. Madame de Poitiers, poor little woman, who has never been anywhere or seen anything, was dying to go to the review of the Body Guard, but did not quite venture to show herself abroad in her deep mourning. Well, we discussed that important question, and it was unanimously agreed that there would be no harm in her going with me, provided she kept herself concealed in the back

of my coach. As we were talking and laughing over this matter your uncle arrived from Paris. We broached the subject to him, but no sooner was the review mentioned, than he looked as black as thunder, and I saw at once that we were in a dreadful scrape. You must know that he was at one time captain of the Body Guard, and has never got over the loss of that command. It was thoughtless of me not to have recollected how sore he is on the point. I had the mortification of feeling that I had given pain to one whose happiness is the sole study of my life."

"Aye, and then my good uncle said the cruelest, harshest things to you, made a scene that frightened us all out of our wits, and brought the tears into your eyes! and all the time you tried to soothe and appease him, never showing yourself the least irritation."

“It is so easy, my dear girl, not to be provoked when one is not really in the wrong. When it is the passion of the moment, not the deliberate injustice of those we love, which puts harsh words into their mouths. And then I felt so much for him, and grieved that he should suffer.”

“What a dismal supper we went through, nobody venturing to speak, and my uncle darting such angry glances round the table. But how ingeniously you contrived, when we rose from table, to set us all down to cards, without giving time for any remarks to be made. How I did admire you, my dear aunt, more than ever that day.”

“He was so very kind to me the next morning, kissing my hand, and declaring that he ought to worship the ground I tread on. He is so good, your uncle; in spite of his little occasional outbreaks of temper.

It would be difficult to find more happiness in marriage than I have done."

Judithe affectionately pressed the hand of her young great-aunt, and secretly marvelled over the peculiarity of disposition, or the height of virtue, that could find such happiness in a fate that so often called forth the pity of the world.

"Never again," she said to herself, "will I envy or too easily compassionate the fate of my neighbours. If my aunt de Lauzun considers herself one of the most fortunate of human beings, where in the world shall we reckon on finding, or despair of finding, that strange thing called happiness."

It was certainly not in the heart of the friend she was about to visit that it had taken up its abode. The Marquise de Bonneval's anxieties increased instead of diminishing as she drew near to the fulfilment of her most ardent wishes. As the race-horse

strains every muscle as he approaches the goal, so did the tension of her nerves augment as the realisation of her wishes became more certain. Her health was beginning to give way under the perpetual wear and tear of feverish expectation. She was a prey to all the pains of that malady which in those days went by the name of vapours, whereas it is now described under the general term of nervous disease. Her temper had become so strangely irritable, that most of her acquaintances were beginning to avoid her society.

Judithe was struck with the alteration which a year had brought about in her face and in her figure. Her hair had turned white, and her eyes had lost their brightness. When, with all the warmth of her young heart, she threw herself into the marquise's arms, her embrace was returned in a hurried and all but impatient manner.

She was motioned to a chair opposite to the writing-table, before which that lady was sitting, surrounded by letters and papers of various sorts. She then said, in a husky and broken tone of voice :

“The Abbé Dubois has just been with me. He says that my son’s presence is absolutely necessary for the registration of his letters of pardon, which are already drawn up under the seal of state. He must spend a few hours at the Conciergerie. No distinction of rank or of favour can do away with that formality. He requests me to hasten his journey by every means in my power. He must needs come to Paris, and within a short time, I shall see him again. I shall once more clasp him to my heart. I could not have imagined that joy could have been so like sorrow. I feel almost as much overwhelmed by the one as by the other, or rather I believe

that by dint of suffering the weary spirit loses the power of rejoicing."

"Joy will force its way into your heart, dear lady, after a while ; but it has so long been a stranger that you require to get accustomed to its presence."

"It is not possible that he could refuse after all that has been done in his behalf ; and indeed I have pledged my word on the subject. It has been a part of the stipulation throughout."

Madame de Bonneval kept her eyes fixed on Judithe as she murmured these words, although they were not apparently addressed to her. Somewhat embarrassed, and wishing to break through an awkward silence, the latter said, with a slight blush :

"Forgive me, madame, if I venture to make an indiscreet request, but might I so far trespass on your habitual goodness to me, as to ask for a sight of the letter

which Prince Eugene wrote to you after the Battle of Peterwaradin, where M. le Comte de Bonneval covered himself with so much glory !”

The marquise opened one of the drawers of her bureau, and taking out of it a bundle of letters, she selected two or three, which she placed before Judithe.

“Yes, read all that,” she said. “See how they speak of him now. A hero ! a genius ! an honour to his country ! They rave of his exploits ; they laud him to the skies. What do I care for their empty praises. They congratulate me on his successes, but it is his presence I pine for. It is his society I want. See, here is the Emperor’s letter, and that is the Prince’s. Read these verses also. Read them aloud,” she added, putting at the same time a paper in Judithe’s hand. “Let me hear them from your lips.”

It was the ode of Jean Baptiste Rousseau on the Battle of Peterwaradin. It contained the following passage :

“Quel est ce nouvel Alcide,
Qui seul, entouré de morts,
De cette foule homicide
Arrête tous les efforts?
A peine, un fer détestable
Ouvre son flanc redoutable,
Son sang est déjà payé.”¹

The paper dropt from the reader's hands when she came to this stanza, and she covered her face with them, then, in a moment, looking up with a brilliant smile, exclaimed :

“Oh, how happy you must be! Such a

¹ “Who is this new Hercules,
Who single handed,
Surrounded by the fallen,
Of that murderous crowd?
Stems all the efforts?
No sooner has the dreadful steel
Pierced his awful side
Than his blood is instantly avenged.”

glorious triumph. Your son, the defender of Christendom, the terror of the infidels! France hastening to recall him with joy and pride to her bosom, and you—you, his mother!"

She was too much affected to finish her sentence. Judithe stopped short, and tears of delight rolled down her flushed cheeks.

Softened by the sight of that genuine emotion, Madame de Bonneval drew her to her side, called her several times her dear child, her darling girl, but taking her hand, and placing it on her heart, she said:

"The spring is broken here, my love. To see him, only to see him, is what I pine for. I have ceased to care for anything else."

Judithe felt saddened and disappointed. Sympathy could no longer exist between a person whose feelings were worn out

by a long course of suffering and one whose young enthusiasm was awakened by everything connected with heroism and fame. She consoled herself by devouring with eager interest the letters entrusted to her, by carrying away in her memory the lines of the poet; and as she paced up and down the garden alleys of the Hotel de Biron, often startled the sparrows and the rooks by the repetition of that empathic inquiry:

“*Quel est ce nouvel Alcide.*”

A few months elapsed, and the year 1716 drew to a close. The succeeding one was destined to witness a still wilder amount of dissipation, of luxury, and of debauchery than had marked any of the preceding years. The most unbridled licentiousness was daily gaining ground. The manners and the language of the higher classes were visibly deteriorating, and the

misery of the poor was, as always, keeping pace with the prodigality of the rich.

Belonging by birth to the highest nobility in France, and by the politics of her family connected with the Regent's Court, Mademoiselle de Gontaut was thrown into the vortex of a world with which she felt no sympathy.

Her father was master-of-the-horse to the Duke of Orleans, her brother one of his intimate associates; her new sister-in-law, whose attractive qualities and kindness to herself had won her affections, the charming Adélaïde de Gramont Vicomtesse de Gontaut was already numbered amongst the most reckless of the reckless women of that day.

There are persons who seem made to contradict the proverb, and to touch pitch without defilement. Rare instances they are, but doubtless such are to be found.

They live in an atmosphere of vice and immorality, and remain uncontaminated by the corruption around them. Their lot is cast amidst scenes of guilt and depravity; their education seems hardly to have furnished them with what we should deem sufficient antidotes against the poison, and yet, through God's boundless mercy, a shield has been thrown over their helplessness, an unseen angel has clothed them with a garment of purity and simplicity that sets at defiance the foul influences of sin and worldliness, and that has borne them safely through the pestilential miasma they are compelled to breathe. Well may such bow the knee in trembling adoration, when they look back and measure the peril they have escaped, borne through it, or rather lifted above it, by a power they knew not of.

Judithe was a silent but indifferent

spectator of that torrent of iniquity which was surging up around her. Religion had not yet laid hold with a firm grasp of her soul, but He whose will it was to make her His own through the regenerating effects of a life-long trial, was even now guarding her from contamination by means apparently slight, and in ways such as man would not have dreamed of. The romantic fancy which had taken possession of her young mind and which, under certain circumstances, might have become a fatal temptation, served at this time to isolate her from the vain and hard world in which she lived.

Nothing marked the course of those winter months. Her visits to Madame de Bonneval were the most interesting events in her existence. That lady received her at times with all her usual affection, at others with a strange coldness, which she

could only ascribe to the deplorable state of health into which she had fallen. One day she positively announced to her son's arrival.

"In a fortnight," she said, "he will be in Paris; so M. le Comte de Luc informs me. He gives me his word of honour that he will leave Vienna in the first days of February."

"What charming news for you madame," Judithe hastened to add.

"Will his return then give pleasure to no one but his dying mother? Does no other welcome await him?"

"Pardon me, madame. I know that the Duc and Duchesse de Lauzun, and my father and mother also will rejoice with you over this happy event."

"They are interested enough in it," murmured the marquise, between her teeth. After a short pause she said, in an abrupt and somewhat querulous manner: "It would

add greatly to your attractions, Judithe, if you were to take more pains to please. You do not think enough of your looks."

"I assure you, madame, that I devote a very reasonable length of time to my toilette, and that my attendants are quite satisfied with my patience in that respect."

"I am not speaking of your dress," Madame de Bonneval answered, in the same impatient tone. "What I mean is this; you have regular features, a pretty expression of countenance, a pale, clear complexion, which some people very much admire, but all that, is not enough to make a woman attractive. If persons do not make the most of their advantages they cannot expect to please. You might be the most beautiful, the most accomplished, the cleverest woman in France, and yet fail to inspire a single real passion, all for want of that feminine skill which knows how to obtain,

and above all to retain, possession of a man's heart."

"I have never given a thought to the subject," Judithe coldly replied, "never having felt the desire of making any such conquests, I confess that I have not taken pains to learn the means to that end."

"What might hitherto have been unnecessary may before long become a duty," Madame de Bonneval pointedly replied.

Judithe blushed and remained silent. Her friend's dry and sharp manner did not invite confidence, and so she concealed her embarrassment under an apparent obtuseness; and, feigning not to understand her hints, she availed herself of the first opportunity of taking leave.

The following day she was summoned at an unusually early hour to her mother's apartments. Madame de Biron was in bed, and her coverlet strewn with various papers which she had been perusing. A

letter from the Duc de Lauzun was lying open before her, and one from Madame de Bonneval was in her hand. She tied them all together with a ribbon, and then graciously desired her daughter to be seated. With a more affectionate manner than usual she said :

“I have always had occasion to congratulate myself, my dear, on the docility of your disposition, and your readiness to comply with any of your father’s wishes and mine.”

Judithe took her mother’s hand, and pressed it respectfully to her lips. She felt very dutifully inclined at that moment. There might have been, perhaps, something passing in her mind tantamount to the phrase quoted by Madame de Sévigné : “*J’épouserai qui vous voudrez pourvu que ce soit, Mademoiselle Hortense ;*” but without venturing on any answer beyond that mute caress, she anxiously looked for her mother’s next words.

“What I am about to impart to you, my love, will be a fresh proof, if such were needed, of the solicitude with which we study your interests, and I have not the least doubt that in this instance also, you will yield a ready submission to our wishes. The Marquise de Bonneval has asked of us your hand for her son, and we have accepted the proposal. It is suitable as to fortune, and advantageous too when we consider the high position which the Comte de Bonneval holds in the army and at the Court of His Imperial Majesty. His recent successes, and the favour with which he is regarded by so many eminent personages, have effaced the impressions produced by certain passages in his past life. The Council of Regency has just abolished his sentence of outlawry, and he is about to arrive in Paris for the double purpose of registering his letters of pardon, and of celebrating his marriage with you.”

Judithe knelt down by her mother's bedside, and for an instant hid her face in her hands. In a tone of voice, which contrasted by its emotion with the formal nature of her reply, she then said:

“It belongs to you, madame, and to my father to dispose of my hand as you may think best. You have condescended to take my future happiness into consideration. I have only to express my deep sense of your kindness, and cheerfully to submit to your commands.”

Madame de Biron drew her daughter towards her, and gave her an affectionate embrace. Then selecting from the bundle of papers in her hand the Duc de Lauzun's letter, she glanced over it once more and said, in a tone of marked satisfaction:

“It is my uncle who will undertake all the expences of the wedding.”¹

¹ St. Simon's Memoirs.

Then she read half aloud the Marquise de Bonneval's letter, and some others which had reference to the same subject. While perusing one of these she exclaimed:

“M. le Duc de St. Simon has had the *goodness*, it is just like him, to speak in the Council of Regency *against* M. de Bonneval's return. He was almost the only one to do so! I really cannot understand your father's infatuation about that egotistical coxcomb. It is just the same on the subject of the ducal peerage. Everybody knows that M. de Biron's right to it is evident, and the Duc de St. Simon ventures to term his claim an arrogant pretension.² If your aunts were not so absurdly partial to him, I should long ago have insisted on declining his visits. But your father's blindness on that point passes all belief. And what, I should like to know, has M. de St. Simon ever done to

¹ Historical.

deserve his friendship? Introduced him to the Duc de Beauvilliers! a mighty great service indeed!"

Madame de Biron was talking on in this manner when a servant came in and announced that the Abbé Dubois was in the drawing-room, and was asking to see her.

"It is about M. de Bonneval's affairs," she said. "Show him in directly," and she hastily made a sign to her daughter to withdraw. As the Regent's favourite¹ turned his small, piercing eyes on the young girl, who was hurrying away, a smile hovered on his thin lips. He had received that morning a letter from his friend M. de Bonneval, which made mention of his mar-

¹ If the Abbé Dubois had as much honesty and religion as he has wit, he would be a valuable person, but he believes in nothing, and respects neither morality or truth. He is very learned, and has made my son well-informed also; I wish, however, with all my heart that he had never seen him."—*Lettres de Madame de Bavière.*

riage with Mademoiselle de Gontaut in terms which the sight of the bride recalled to his mind. An honest, or even a kind-hearted man would have sighed at what made the Abbé Dubois smile.

Tenth Chapter.

"Thus with delight we linger to survey
The promised joys of life's unmeasured way,
Thus from afar each dim-discovered scene
More pleasing seems than all the past has been."

ROGERS.

"Ceremony was but desired at first
To set a gloss on faint deeds, hollow welcomes."

SHAKESPEARE.

SLOWLY, and with a look of deep thought in her face, Judithe ascended the steps of the little back-staircase which led to the *entresol* occupied by Madame Dupuis, her good old nurse, who, since her return to Paris, had been confined to her room by a long illness, which was gradually turning to a decline. She was

seated in a high-backed chair close by a window which looked upon the spacious court of the Hotel de Biron. Her feet were resting on a stool, her head propped up by pillows, and her hands helplessly folded on her knees, seemed to be reposing from the trials of a long life. She was very dim-sighted now, and one of her principal amusements was to watch the carriages as they rolled from the entrance-door to the foot of the stone steps. She used to boast that she could distinguish by the sound of the wheels, or the more or less speed with which they moved, the various equipages which in past days she had known by sight.

“Ah!” she would exclaim, “there is Madame de Simiane, I am certain, her grey horses treading as briskly as ever. Hark, that must be the Marquis de Seignelay’s coach; I know the sound of its heavy wheels. Now I hear, I am sure

of it, M. de Chamillart's equipage. His horses creep along like their master, who never knew how to hold up his head, or walk gracefully into a drawing-room. Ah! there is M. le marquis coming home. I know the sound of his carriage just as I did that of his footsteps at the time when you were a baby, and my daughter was nursing you at our cottage at Biron. But who is that in such a desperate hurry I wonder, jumping out of the carriage before it has fairly stopped. It must be monsieur le vicomte, or monsieur l'abbé; your brothers are made of quicksilver I think."

And the good old woman would try to get a glimpse of the faces of some of those restless comers and goers, whose names and faces were connected with all the recollections of her past life, but who never came near the narrow little apartment where her existence was dwindling

away. But her own dear child never failed to console her by her sweet presence, and her loving cheerful words.

On the particular day in question, she entered her nurse's room with a sort of timidity, and seated herself on the stool beside her knee. Then taking both her hands in hers, she said in a low voice:

"I have a piece of news for you nurse, or rather *two* great pieces of news."

"What can they be about. Do tell me at once, my dear. At my age one is almost afraid of news."

"Oh, there is nothing in mine but what is pleasant, nurse. In the first place my cousin de Bonneval will be really and truly in Paris in a fortnight."

"Oh my good Lord!" exclaimed Madame Dupuis, clasping her hands and raising her eyes to Heaven, whilst two tears were slowly rolling down her aged cheeks.

"You must not cry, nurse; come, look

at me and smile. Are you not *very* happy?"

"He will come back, my dear child, and I shall not see him. Six months ago I could still have crawled down stairs, and hid myself somewhere just to see him pass, just to see once more that beloved face of his, but now that I am nailed to my chair, how shall I ever set eyes upon him?"

"You shall see him, dear nurse; I promise you that you shall see him."

"You are always so kind, my darling, but how can you get me a sight of him? My eyes are so weak that unless I was close to him—"

"But I tell you, my dear, obstinate old nurse, that you shall see him *here*; yes, *here* in this very room. Do not shake your head and look incredulous. Have I not another piece of news to tell you? Such a great bit of news that I

hardly know how to give utterance to it. Put your ear close to my mouth, please."

Madame Dupuis having complied, and laid her wrinkled face against the blushing cheek of the young girl, the latter whispered in her ear:

"I have the honour to announce to you the marriage of Mademoiselle Judithe Charlotte de Gontaut with the Comte Claude Alexandre de Bonneval!"

"Heaven protect us!" exclaimed Madame Dupuis. "Is it possible?"

"Make haste to wish me joy, nurse. My parents have decided that I am to be married to him, so now you see it will be my duty to love him. Yes, from this very moment to love him," she repeated, with a beaming look of joy in her soft eyes.

"But you have never seen him, my dear?"

"No; but you have told me, nurse,

and I have thought so much about him; so often pictured him to myself that I am sure that I know him better than many persons I see every day. And now you understand, nurse, how it is that I can promise to bring him to see you. I suppose that a bride has a right to order about her betrothed husband. Don't you think so, Madame Dupuis?"

"Oh, without doubt, my dear. But then such a great general as the Comte de Bonneval, he will not be, perhaps, just like any other husband."

"True!" exclaimed Judithe, with emotion, "nor will my marriage be like all other marriages. Only think of bearing a name already so famous! of being the wife of a man so feared and so admired. Is it not a glorious destiny. A fate such as I had always dreamed of. And yet what am I, a poor little helpless girl, to have deserved such an honour?"

Madame Dupuis took her hand in both her hands, and looking earnestly into her eyes, she said, with overflowing tenderness :

“ Oh, who could help loving you, the best, the sweetest, the most perfect of human beings ! God grant that this noble count may prove a good husband to you, my dearest, that he may make you as happy as you deserve.”

“ I do not care about being happy,” replied the young girl, with a joyous expression of countenance that strangely belied her words ; then after affectionately embracing Madame Dupuis, she went off to the school-room of her little sisters Charlotte and Marie, and while she held them on her knees, with one hand playing with their fair curls, and the other employed in turning over the leaves of a picture-book, many a brilliant day-dream floated in her mind, and visions of the future unfolded themselves in quick suc-

cession on the glowing canvass of her imagination.

A few days later, after a long conversation with M. and Madame de Biron, the Marquise de Bonneval begged to see their daughter, and Judithe was summoned to the drawing-room, where several members of her family were assembled. When she entered the room Madame de Bonneval seemed strangely agitated. She embraced her future daughter-in-law, but her manner was embarrassed, and her voice shook when she spoke of her son and of his return.

“The Comte de Bonneval,” she said, “was to arrive in a very few days, and, after spending twenty-four hours at the Conciergerie and appearing before the tribunal which was to release him from all legal penalties, he would hasten to pay his respects to his beloved relatives, his bride, and her parents.

The Marquis de Biron expressed the satisfaction it would give him to carry his intended son-in-law to visit the Regent and the princes, and to present him to the most distinguished personages of the Court.

The day and the hour for this first interview were agreed upon, and mutual congratulations passed between the marquise and the various members of the bride's family.

M. de Lauzun and his wife, Madame d'Urfé, Madame de Nogaret, as well as the Marquis and Marquise de Biron, were eloquent in their praises of M. de Bonneval, and expressed themselves highly flattered at an alliance that was to unite them more closely with a man of such extraordinary merit. High-sounding compliments and neatly-turned phrases were exchanged in abundance between the contracting parties. It would have been quite an affecting

scene had these demonstrations been in the least degree genuine.

Two of the persons present suffered from a sense of unreality in what was going on around them. Both Madame de Bonneval and Judithe felt ill at ease, their feelings were too deeply engaged to enable them to utter in a careless manner the phrases which ran so glibly from the tongues of most of those who were present that day.

Judithe was continually striving to meet the eyes of her friend, but they were turned away as if purposely to avoid hers. She could not understand that after having so long treated her as a daughter, now, when she was about to acquire a right to that name, her manner should all at once have become so formal and cold. True it was that for some time past there had been something constrained in their intercourse, but surely *now* all embarrassment must vanish, all estrangement cease.

Anxious to struggle with her somewhat wounded feelings, she went up to Madame de Bonneval, who was preparing to take leave, and respectfully kissing her hands, she said :

“And when shall I have the happiness of seeing you alone, madame?”

“To-morrow, if you please,” was the answer, rather hesitatingly given.

The next day, accordingly, Judithe was shown into Madame de Bonneval's dressing-room, and by her affectionate caresses succeeded in dispelling for a while the gloom that seemed to hang over her spirits. After returning her embrace with something of her former warmth of manner, the marquise still holding her hand in her own, gazed intently on her face, as if trying to read her thoughts, and then said :

“Promise me, my dearest Judithe, to second my views in every possible manner,

and to use whatever influence you may gain over my son's mind, to obtain from him a promise that he will remain in France, and give up altogether that foreign service, which keeps him away from me, which exposes him to incessant dangers, and which if he persists in it will soon bring me to the grave. Give me your word, my dear child, that you will leave nothing untried for this purpose; that your love, your prayers, your tears—"

"You forget, madame," Judithe interrupted, and there was something of indignation in her manner, "that I do not as yet know the Comte de Bonneval, not even by sight."

The marquise went on without taking any notice of her remark.

"Remember that I rely upon your co-operation on this subject, that I have a right to expect it. My son must give

up the Emperor's service; he must get the better of that absurd and romantic passion for war, which is always thrusting him into unnecessary dangers. Why cannot he now serve his own country like other people, or occupy himself with the re-establishment of his affairs, which are in sad disorder? Have I not devoted the best years of my life to the furtherance of his interests? Is it not fair that he should, in his turn, sacrifice something to my wishes, to my need of his support and society? I have wept, suffered, and toiled long enough. My life is a burthen to me if it is to be spent away from him, for whom alone I exist. You pledge yourself, do you not, that with heart and soul, you will join your efforts with mine to detain him in France?"

With a deep blush and a voice that

she vainly endeavoured to render steady, Judithe answered:

“I have no doubt, madame, that the ties which are about to unite me to M. de Bonneval, as well as my devoted attachment to you, will not fail to inspire me with a sincere affection for my cousin. Ever since I can remember I have had such a high opinion of his merits, that it will take but a short time, I am sure, to awaken in my heart a still warmer feeling. My wishes will, of course, be in exact accordance with yours, and my secret prayers continually offered up for the same object, but it would not accord either with my principles or my inclinations to seek to influence his decision on a point which must touch very closely his interests or his glory, if he does not concede it at once to a mother to whom he owes so much.

Believe me, madame, to detain him in France, or to accompany him wherever he might go, would be the dearest desire of my heart. Without seeing him, I have learnt to care for him. His reputation and his interests have long been dear to me. How then could I venture to ask him to give up his glorious career, the honour of defending the frontiers of Christendom against the infidels, the companionship of heroes, the friendship of a great warrior, for a life of idleness and ease? To you, madame, I acknowledge it his duty, his affection, his gratitude are due. You have a right to demand such sacrifices at his hands, and should you succeed in your efforts and obtain them from him I confess that my weak woman's heart will rejoice; but for my part, if the voice of honour, and his ardent love of

glory, should call him away from my side, my grief will be silent, and never rise up as an obstacle between him and what to him is dearer than life."

"And so you deliberately purpose to place yourself in direct opposition to my wishes?" angrily exclaimed the marquise, "for that is in reality the meaning of all those fine phrases about glory and honour. You decline altogether to comply with my request! It is, I doubt not, a very agreeable prospect for a young married woman to remain in Paris in the full enjoyment of her liberty, free to lead a life of gaiety and pleasure. I can easily imagine that it would cost you an effort to renounce so agreeable a vision of independence in order to further a mother's less *disinterested* anxiety not to part again with her son."

Judithe remained silent. This bitter sarcasm did not draw from her an indignant repartee, nor did it even excite in her any inward feelings of irritation. It gave her pain, but chiefly for the sake of the person who had uttered it, and whose injustice and anger were evidently attributable to bodily as well as mental suffering. By dint of soothing expressions and gentle caresses, she gradually succeeded in pacifying the marquise, and recalling her to more reasonable sentiments.

They conversed together for some time, and parted with mutual tenderness, but the charm and the freedom of their intercourse was at an end. Both were aware of it; both lamented it, but there are certain conditions of mind and of feeling, which, when they have once gone by, can never be renewed. It would be as easy to summon

back a dream when the waking hour has dissolved it, as to re-establish sympathy between two persons who, having once been intimate, have ceased to understand each other.

Eleventh Chapter.

"Fame runs before him as the morning star,
And shouts of joy salute him from afar,

* * * * *

The admiring crowds are dazzled with surprise,
And on his goodly person feed their eyes."

DRYDEN.

"Se godessi a tuo volere
Ogni rama, ogni piacere
Alla morte che sarà?
Ogni cosa e vanità.

E se in feste, giuochi, e canti
Passi i giorni tutti quanti
Alla morte che sarà?
Ogni cosa e vanità.

Se vivessi in questo mondo
Sempre lieto, ognor giocondo,
Alla morte che sarà,
Ogni cosa e vanità.

ST. PHILIP NERI.

A DAY or two previous to the one on
which it had been expected that M. de

Bonneval would return to Paris, Judithe went to the theatre with Madame de Gontaut. They were accompanied by the Abbé de Moissac, her brother, and M. de Riom, one of her cousins. Their box was now filled by a number of young men of fashion, who were the devoted admirers of the beautiful vicomtesse.

Mademoiselle Sainval was acting that evening the part of *Hermione*, in the tragedy of "Andromache." Her gestures, her glances, her thrilling intonations, expressed with wonderful power all those passions of love, hatred, and jealousy which raged in the bosom of the rejected bride. The audience in the pit was deeply moved and excited, but in the boxes and amongst the loungers on the scenes and at the back of the stage there was apparently little emotion. It is not easy to elicit anything like a manifestation of feeling or of admiration on the part of those

who have always lived in the chilling atmosphere of fashionable society. However, when the incomparable actress pronounced, with the deepest pathos, the following lines :

“Je leur ai commandé de cacher mon injure ;
J’attendais en secret le retour d’un parjure :
J’ai cru que tôt ou tard, à ton devoir rendu,
Tu me rapporterais un cœur qui m’était dû ;
Je t’aimais inconstant ! Qu’aurais-je fait fidèle ?” ¹

A burst of applause rang through every corner of the house. Judithe raised her eyes, which were full of tears, and looked to see from what part of the theatre issued the repeated “*bravos*,” uttered in a loud and sonorous voice, which were

¹“I bid them conceal my wrongs,
I awaited in silence the return of the perjured one,
I thought that sooner or later, obedient to duty,
Thou wouldst restore to me the heart which is my due.
I loved thee faithless ! What then, hadst thou been
true ? ”

clearly distinguishable amidst the chorus of general acclamation. They proceeded from the Austrian Ambassador's box, and there, leaning over the side, was an officer in the imperial uniform, whom she instantly recognised as her cousin, her betrothed husband. She turned as pale as death, and for a moment the stage, the pit, and the boxes seemed to swim before her eyes, as she slowly murmured to herself:

“There he is. There he is.”

A strange, unaccountable depression stole over her spirits. It seemed as if she was passing from the land of youthful dreams to the awful region of life's realities. The amusement of her fancy was at an end. The romance so busily woven through many a past year, was now to give place to what a secret presentiment told her would be no child's play, no girlish sport, but the beginning of a long

course of hopes, fears, and struggles, which for one moment she instinctively shrank from.

There he stands before her, the object of her childish enthusiasm ! The hero of so many imaginary scenes ; he whose name has called such deep blushes to her cheek, and made her innocent heart beat with such varied emotions ! He who is henceforward to be the sole master of her fate.

There are moments when we stand trembling on the brink of some new phase in our life, not fearing, nor grieving, nor rejoicing at the approaching change, but struck with the irresistible consciousness that the old things of our youth have passed away, and the new things of an unfathomed futurity are at hand.

Silent, abstracted, motionless, she kept watching that form, that face, which so

perfectly answered to the picture which her imagination had so often conjured up. Not a single look or gesture escaped her. She heard every word of the tragedy as it went on, but though the sound reached her ears, their meaning did not seem to reach her mind. She was absent in the full sense of the expression.

When between the acts M. de Riom, who was sitting next to her, attempted to engage her in conversation she only answered by monosyllables. He turned into ridicule the unhappy passion of *Orestes*, and exclaimed, as he threw himself languishingly back in his seat:

“Would not such fidelity be reckoned the height of absurdity in our days?”

Judithe smiled, and shrugged her shoulders in an evasive manner. She often was obliged, in the society in which she lived, to have recourse to these little

subterfuges, in order to avoid expressing her own opinions, generally so much at variance with the tone of thought of those about her.

Madame de Gontaut laughed and said :

“Gallant Knight of Gascony,¹ do not

¹ M. de Riom, one of the plainest and most unattractive persons imaginable, had inspired the Duchesse de Berry with the most violent, and as it proved, the most lasting passion. M. de Lauzun, his uncle, used always to call him, “*Ce Cadet, de Gascogne.*” St. Simon describes him thus: “Riom was a younger son of the house of Aidie; his mother was Madame de Biron’s sister. He was neither handsome or witty; a fat, short fellow, with pale, puffy cheeks. Gentle, civil, and naturally courteous. A good, well-meaning creature.”

Madame Elizabeth Charlotte de Bavière, the Duchesse de Berry’s grandmother, writes as follows to one of her German correspondents: “I cannot understand how anybody can have been in love with that Riom. He has an ugly face and an ugly figure, and resembles a ghost, with a Chinese

run a tilt at the god of love. It would really be a piece of base ingratitude."

The little man she thus addressed laughed heartily also, and the curtain

nose and eyes. He looks more like a walking pagoda than the Gascon he is. It is but too true that the Duchesse de Berry was secretly married to him. It is the only thing that could console me for her death. Not but that he is of a good family; the Duc de Lauzun is his uncle, and M. de Biron his first cousin. But that of course did not entitle him to so great an honour."

This *mésalliance* must have indeed shocked Madame, who, as St. Simon relates, boxed her son's ears before the assembled court, after he had consented, reluctantly enough too, to marry Mademoiselle de Blais, and who, as she herself records in her correspondence, literally scolded to death an unfortunate German young lady who had assumed the title of Countess Palatine. The King, Louis the Fourteenth, said to her on that occasion: "To interfere with your family titles is, it appears, a matter of life and death." She coolly replied, "I hate lies and liars."

drew up for the fourth act of the tragedy. Before its conclusion the door of one of the opposite boxes was thrown open, and the Duc de Lauzun took his accustomed place on the side nearest the stage. He was soon joined by the Duc de St. Simon, whose opera-glass was immediately directed in succession to every part of the theatre. As he turned it towards the Austrian Ambassador's box he gave a start, which did not escape Judithe's attention, and then stretching across the young de Gêvres, who was sitting between them, he hastily whispered something to M. de Lauzun.

The duke half rose from his chair, and in an excited manner despatched his grandson on some errand, the result of which he seemed impatiently to await. In the meantime the Duc de St. Simon disappeared, and a moment afterwards en-

tered Madame de Gontaut's box. She received him with her most gracious smiles, but not so Judithe, who coldly bowed her head and turned away. She had a very great dislike to this eminent man, a dislike that almost amounted to aversion. It will be acknowledged, perhaps, even by his warmest admirers, that great as were his merits and virtues, especially as contrasted with the general immorality of the age in which he lived, there was that also in his character and tone of mind which must have been peculiarly trying to the generous and the tender-hearted. Something that accounted for, if it did not justify, the feelings with which Mademoiselle de Gontaut, for instance, regarded him, even before any private reasons had added to her dislike. The bitterness of his animosities, the cool insolence of his pride, varnished over by a

studied politeness and a rigorous adherence to etiquette, had always aroused her indignation, and now that to the catalogue of his offences was added the heinous one in her eyes, of having in the Council of Regency, almost single-handed, opposed M. de Bonneval's return, she found it difficult to feel in charity with him.

"Never," observed the duke, as he sat down by Madame de Gontaut, "never have I had occasion to witness so joyful a surprise as M. de Lauzun's at the sight of a nephew so long in disgrace, and now so strangely whitewashed. His transports were so great that I could not choose but see his grace in a new character. I protest that he reminded me of the father of the prodigal son. Indeed the parallel will be complete; the welcome, the feast, the *ring*," he added, with a marked emphasis

and a glance at Mademoiselle de Gontaut's averted face.

She whispered to her brother, but loud enough for the duke to hear :

"I had always supposed that the Jansenists prided themselves on their peculiar respect for the Scriptures."

"You do not mean to say that M. de Bonneval is here?" cried Madame de Gontaut, with vivacity.

"I have just given up to him my place in M. de Lauzun's box, madame," the duke replied, "and he is, as you may see yourself, at this moment receiving the duke's embraces. He is, upon my word, a very fortunate person to find himself thus welcomed in a place where to see a Frenchman in an Austrian uniform is a prodigious novelty, and in my humble opinion one not in over good taste."

A fortnight before Judithe would per-

haps have ventured to break a lance with the old duke in her cousin's behalf, but now she felt quite unable to venture upon his defence, her eyes, however, with mute eloquence entreated Madame de Gontaut to take up his case in her stead, and the beautiful Adélaïde, smiling behind the fan with which she half covered her face, looked at M. de St. Simon in a half-mischievous, half-deprecating manner, which seemed at once to pave the way for and to apologise for any little gentle impertinence she might be about to utter, and said :

“ Why are you so severe on our cousin de Bonneval, my lord duke? Has he by any chance laid claim to the remotest reversion of a ducal peerage, or may we suppose you by the strangest accident in the world, to be a little out of temper to-night ? ”

The duke bowed and replied :

“You attack me, charming vicomtesse, on a subject with regard to which my respect for your family compels me to be silent. I should be far more concerned at the accusation you bring against me if I were not ready to plead guilty to the charge. There are certain persons whom I feel it difficult to speak of with becoming moderation, and my spleen is strangely moved by what I have witnessed this evening. I own myself subject to strong likings and dislikings, nor would I care for the friendship of a man whom nothing could rouse to hatred.”

“I am quite of your opinion, my lord,” Judithe exclaimed, for she fancied in her simplicity that her gentle antipathies and childish animosities were of the same nature with the bitter and sometimes savage malignity of the man who, as in the instance of the Duc du Maine, could insult misfortune in the name of virtue.

Madame de Gontaut and all those about her kept their eyes fixed on the opposite box, full of curiosity to see the person who was at that moment exciting such general interest. For several months past he had been a subject of discussion in the *salons* and the public promenades of Paris, and now that his striking and prepossessing appearance so well answered to the reputation which he had acquired there was a sudden and nearly universal impression in his favour.

“I have been told,” M. de Riom said, “that the formalities M. de Bonneval had to go through to-day were turned almost into an ovation, so great was the crowd assembled on the occasion and the cheers of the mob when he came out. Even the judges treated him with marked civility, and ordered a velvet cushion to be placed on the criminal’s bench where he had to take his seat for a few instants.”

“Ah! that is just like those conceited and cringing lawyers,” observed M. de St. Simon. “Purse-proud as they may be, we always see them fawning upon a title, and licking the shoes of a nobleman.”

Again the curtain drew up for the last act of the tragedy, and the conversation was interrupted. Once Judithe fancied that the Duc de Lauzun was directing towards her M. de Bonneval's attention, and her heart beat almost to suffocation. Once more she heard the sound of his voice as a fresh trait of genius in the gifted actress drew from him an admiring exclamation. And then the piece came to an end, and M. de Riom offered her his arm to descend the great staircase of the theatre. Her eyes timidly wandered in search of her uncle, but he was standing at some distance behind her, and she could not see him. He had pointed

her out to M. de Bonneval, who was looking at her with more curiosity than interest.

When they were seated in the carriage Madame de Gontaut threw her arm round Judithe's neck, and half-playfully, half-earnestly, said :

“My dear child you will be married to the handsomest and most captivating man in France. As you value your happiness do not fall in love with him, for if you do, take my word for it, you will be the most wretched creature in the world.”

“And if I do *not* love him, dear sister, shall I be the happier for it?”

“Of course you will, my dear. Are there not a thousand fascinating little enjoyments in life, far preferable to a huge unwieldy happiness, questionable while it lasts, and which leaves nothing behind it but tears and regrets. Believe me, little

sister, a very reasonable, unimpassioned sort of regard is the best material to begin married life upon. Ah! me! if I had been so foolish as to fall in love with M. de Gontaut, what would have become of me by this time? I should be crying my eyes out, dying of jealousy—”

“And as it is?” Judithe sorrowfully said.

“Oh! as it is I am as happy as a queen; I amuse myself excellently well. I spend my time just as I please. To be sure I have sometimes to endure the sharp remarks of M. le Duc de Lauzun, which would be twice as severe if I did not happen to be my grandfather’s granddaughter.¹ Have

¹ Lauzun was always falling upon everybody with the most keen and overwhelming sarcasms, and all the time maintaining an appearance of gentleness. The ministers, the generals, the people

you not heard that I am called one of the wild ones of the Court. I assure you that I quite glory in the name."

"Well, but later—what is it all to end in?"

"What do you mean, my dear? I do not understand you."

"I was thinking," Judithe said, "of a story which M. de Cambray was relating to us the other day at the Duchesse de Beauvilliers. It was about a saint who brought about a conversion simply

in favour at Court and their families he unmercifully assailed. He had usurped a sort of privilege to say and to do anything he pleased, without allowing others the right to resent it, the Gramonts alone excepted. He never forgot the hospitality they had shown him at the outset of his life. He loved them, interested himself about their affairs, and never treated them disrespectfully.—*St. Simon's Memoirs.*

by the repetition of those two words, 'and then.'"¹

"Are you intending to effect mine, my dear?"

"I only meant that a little meditation on those two words might carry you very far towards it perhaps."

"Why, in the name of fortune, what next, my dear Judithe? You visit at the Duchesse de Beauvilliers! You converse with M. de Cambray! He tells you little edifying stories. I see it all at a glance. You are actually going to turn out a saint! Really you have chosen a peculiar time for your conversion. You had better consult your intended husband on that subject. It will be quite in his line!"

"Laugh as much as you please, my dear sister; you know very well that I

¹ *E poi!—St. Philip Neri.*

am not given to preaching, that I leave everyone to act as their conscience suggests. But do not be displeased with me for quoting M. de Cambray's story. It struck me very much at the time, and I could not help reverting to it just now."

"My dear little Judithe," exclaimed her sister-in-law, "you are the dearest and most sensible girl in the world, and I know that your patience with the foolish and with the wicked is inexhaustible. I reckon myself amongst the first; not, I trust, amongst the last. Not at present, at least; and who knows? perhaps the day may come when I shall call to mind your saint and his two words."

Judithe affectionately embraced her sister-in-law, and took leave of her at the door of her apartments. Then retiring to her own room, she sat up for a long

time, engrossed by her thoughts; living over the past; picturing to herself the future. It was a satisfaction to her to feel that the past, the present, and the future were henceforward connected together by one single interest, which had unconsciously sprung up in her heart in the days of her infancy, and which she now foresaw would only cease with her life. She had a dim presentiment that suffering was awaiting her, but sufferings foreseen in such moments have not much power to alarm; they present nothing very terrible to the imagination. Past sorrows, and sorrows to come, especially if connected with the object which is dearest to our hearts, have a sort of sweetness when viewed from afar. They are seen in a softened light. The thorns that so cruelly wound us at the time do not show at a dis-

tance. They have been trodden down in the one case, in the other they are concealed from our sight by a providential haze.

Twelfth Chapter.

“He that’s famous
For honourable actions in the war
As you are, Antonius, a proved soldier,
Is fellow to a king.”

MASSINGER.

“How some men creep in skittish fortune’s halls,
While others play the idiots in her eyes.”

SHAKESPEARE.

“Men, like butterflies,
Show not their mealy wings but to the summer.”

SHAKESPEARE.

ON the 6th of February, 1716, Made-
moiselle de Gontaut was with her mother

in her private sitting-room, awaiting the moment when the Marquis de Biron was to present to her as her future husband that stranger whose name and image had been so long familiar to her thoughts, the master whose sway her heart had from infancy acknowledged.

When her father entered, accompanied by M. de Bonneval, it seemed so strange to her to feel the dream of her life thus accomplished, that she could hardly believe in the reality of the scene she was going through.

“Here is your cousin,” M. de Biron said, as he introduced the Comte de Bonneval, “here is your cousin, whose return fills us with joy. He wishes to be permitted to kiss your hand, and you will I know be happy to welcome him to this house as a friend for whom we feel the sincerest regard, and whose

extraordinary merit reflects honour upon us all."

The joy that the marquis thus expressed was no copy of his countenance. He was truly delighted at the way in which M. de Bonneval had been received in Paris.¹ Nothing could have gratified him more than to marry his daughter to a man so much the fashion, and so well qualified to succeed in the world, now that, as he trusted, he had sown his wild oats.

As to Judithe, she was perfectly composed, only a shade paler than usual. When the Comte de Bonneval bent down to kiss her hand a little tremulous sigh escaped her, but she said, in her usual clear voice:

"God be praised, my dear cousin, that

¹ Bonneval saw the King, the Regent, everybody.
—*St. Simon's Memoirs.*

you have returned in safety, and that your mother has lived to see this joyful event."

"It is very kind of you, my cousin," M. de Bonneval answered, with a frank and winning smile, "to call my return a happy event. At my advanced age and after so long an absence, I cannot expect to be welcomed by any but a few old friends."

"Ah! my cousin," Judithe exclaimed, with a deep blush, "when a man's fame has kept pace with his years, he cannot be said to grow old. He has at least nothing to regret in the lapse of time."

The count acknowledged the compliment by a graceful inclination of the head, and went on to speak, in an agreeable manner, of his feelings of astonishment and satisfaction in finding

himself once more in the midst of his relatives and friends.

“ I had so entirely renounced every hope of a return to France that I am often tempted to cry out like the Doge of Genoa when my friends are urging me to admire the great changes that have taken place during my absence, ‘ To me the most wonderful thing in Paris is to find myself in it.’ ”

There was a singular charm in M. de Bonneval’s open and animated countenance, something cordial and winning in his manners, and in his conversation a pleasing originality, a gift of humour, which did not consist so much in a series of *bon mots*, nor exactly in repartee or witty observations, but in a certain playfulness of mind and felicity of language, which was irresistibly amusing, and peculiar to him-

self. On no subject, grave or gay, would it have occurred to others to say the sort of things which he did, and yet there was never anything forced or out of the way in his remarks.

Not one of his looks, not one of his words, on that first day of their acquaintance, was lost upon Judithe. She kept note of his every gesture, "she catalogued his smiles." Like Helen, "she drew on the tablet of her heart every line and trick of that sweet favour" which her idolatrous fancy was henceforward to feed on. There were the arched brows, the eagle eye, the well-formed mouth, which she had so often gazed at in that banished picture, which had now been restored to an honourable position in the principal *salon* of

the Hotel de Biron. The bright smile that suddenly lighted up those stern and slightly bronzed features ; the sound of a voice which, though loud, was melodious, were in keeping with her expectations, and realised her previsions. The bewitching gaiety of M. de Bonneval's manner was irresistible ; and his young cousin felt its influence. She was doubtless happy on that day ; it was inscribed in bright characters in her book of memory. Few of its subsequent pages bore so fair a record. When the visit was over, and her mother and she were left together, Judithe seized her hand and kissed it.

“ You think your cousin pleasing, I see,” Madame de Biron said, with a smile. She had understood the meaning of that little spontaneous burst of

feeling in her quiet and reserved daughter.

Judithe answered only by a similar smile, and bent her head down on a large nosegay of violets, which M. de Bonrepos had sent her that morning, for the 7th of February happened to be her birthday. Some rather pretty verses accompanied these flowers. Love and jealousy were playfully hinted at in terms which revealed perhaps a deeper feeling than at first sight seemed intended. On the whole Judithe was gratified with the delicate homage of her old and faithful admirer. It was easy enough for her to feel pleased at that moment. Her betrothed husband had smiled upon her, and all the world was gay.

“Perhaps M. de Bonneval may one day see these lines,” she said to herself, as

she folded the paper and put it up in her desk.

All her vanity, all her ambition, are centered in that thought. To attract his attention for one instant, to win from him some slight token of notice and of kindness, is henceforward to be her only object, her only study, her coveted reward. Alas! it is a mournful sight to see the pure incense of a young and genuine affection offered up to a worthless idol; the homage of a noble heart paid at the shrine of a false divinity!

In looks, in character, and in manners, M. de Bonneval was singularly well fitted to shine in that society which had hailed with acclamation his return to Paris, and which now made him the object of its hero-worship.¹ The new Hercules, as Jean

¹ The tide of public opinion was running high in his favour. There was a unanimous burst of popular enthusiasm. Tall, handsome, with an open and soldier-like countenance, an eye of fire, a majestic bearing, his hair dressed in a peculiar

Baptiste Rousseau had named him, the handsome Hercules, as the Parisian ladies now called him, was followed in the streets by admiring crowds, surrounded in the places of public amusement, invited to the most brilliant parties at Court, and in town. His presence was everywhere sought after with the most flattering *empressement*. His former enemies, men who at one time had heaped upon him the most opprobrious epithets, now followed in the wake of his triumph, and were foremost in proffering to him what they called their friendship. The ready pens of the poets of the day, the haunters of *salons*, the

manner, like King Charles the Twelfth, wherever he went every eye was fixed upon him. When, in addition, we consider that he was eloquent, winning in manner, free and witty in conversation, there is enough to account for his having been the favourite and the hero of Parisian society in 1717.—*Sainte Beuve's Causeries du Lundi.*

geniuses of the *ruelles*,¹ wrote verses in honour of the hero of Peterwaradin. The Regent was charmed with his witticisms, his convivial improvisations, his continual flow of unchastened humour. At the orgies of the Palais Royal, or at the literary *soirées* of Madame de Lambert, at Sceaux, or at the Luxembourg, he was an equally welcome guest. He carried everything before him by means of that powerful influence which wit can obtain, audacity secure, and fashion consecrate.

It was not very often that he found time to visit his betrothed; when he did pay her any attentions the fascination that he exercised on all those who approached him could not fail of its effect on one whose every feeling was biassed in his favour, who now had learnt to love not his name only as heretofore, but who, under the plea of

¹ A *ruelle* was the narrow space between the bed and the walls in the old-fashioned alcoves, in which the French ladies used to receive their friends.

duty, had yielded up to him, without reserve, the full affections of her young heart.

She was now beginning to experience all those vicissitudes of hope and fear which belong to a timid attachment uncertain of a return.

The April sky is not more liable to alternations of cloud and sunshine than the frame of mind of one who, like Judithe, has staked all her happiness on the love of a man who owns no guide but his fancy, no rule but his passions.

Carried along by the full tide of fashionable life, M. de Bonneval did not always bear in mind that he was engaged to be married. Indeed at times he began to question whether he was actually bound to fulfil the engagement which had been entered upon in his name. It was not that he thought his young bride otherwise than pleasing and attractive. If compelled to go through such a tiresome ceremony he was quite as willing to marry

Mademoiselle de Gontaut as any other young lady he had ever seen, except in so much that he perhaps felt at the bottom of his heart that it would be easier to dispense with all pretence of conjugal duty and affection with regard to a person endowed with less beauty and merit, or who would have appeared less favourably disposed towards himself. He assured his mother that there could not be a greater piece of folly than to burthen him with a wife.¹ Sometimes he threatened to set off for Vienna at once, and leave the whole matter in abeyance, trusting to the chap-

¹ He (Bonneval) was so little inclined to marry that he said to his brother and to his sister-in-law when he paid them a visit in the country: "It is my mother's hobby to see me married. If she persists in it I really think I shall dispense with farewells and take myself off to Germany previously to the appointed day."—*Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne*.

ter of accidents, and more especially to his prolonged absence to bring it to an end. The marquise objected that her word had been pledged in his behalf, and that his marriage with Mademoiselle de Gontaut having been made one of the conditions of his return to Paris, he could not possibly, as a man of honour, withdraw from that engagement. When thus urged on the subject, he quietly shrugged his shoulders and uttered a "So be it then," with a kind of mock resignation which struck a chill into her heart.

She anxiously inquired if he did not like Mademoiselle de Gontaut. If he had any fault to find with her looks or her manners.

"On the contrary," he replied; "she seems to be a very charming person, but marriage is not in my line, and I pity the poor young lady, especially if she should be so unlucky as to take a fancy to me."

The marquise with difficulty restrained the expression of her anger. She scarcely knew how to meet this cool way of viewing the matter, and she trembled for the success of her deep laid scheme. A secret dread came over her lest what she had so ardently desired should prove a stumbling block to her wishes, rather than an assistance in carrying them out. When she thought of the fatal facility with which he could break through every tie, and dispense with every duty, she foresaw how weak would be the chain with which she had sought to bind him. Vainly she tried to win or force from him a promise to give up foreign service, and to remain in France during the rest of her life. He always evaded the question, amused her with fair words, or, wearied with her importunities, gave a point-blank

refusal. His visits to her grew shorter, and were paid at longer intervals. She sank again into her accustomed solitary mode of life. She was again alone with her sorrow, and the hope of other days had grown flickering and dim. There was as much to fear as heretofore, and less to look forward to.

When M. de Bonneval paid his respects at the Hotel de Biron, and, as in duty bound, occasionally addressed his conversation to his bride, the manner with which she received his attentions gracefully combined the homage which she paid to him as a hero, and the flattering interest which she betrayed in everything that concerned him. He had been worshipped by women, flattered by men, but never had so pure a heart throbbed at his approach, or such innocent blushes been called forth by his pre-

sence. Never had he before been *esteemed* by one whom he could not but esteem himself; and though he felt that it was a mistake on her part to respect him as she did, it nevertheless gratified him to be an object of admiration to a high-minded and warm-hearted woman. It led him, unconsciously perhaps, to display before her qualities which served to keep up her illusions, and to be to all appearance the true hero she deemed him. The cynical spirit, the daring impiety, which too often marked his conversation, were never evinced in her company. When, with all the ardent sympathy of her nature, she listened to his descriptions of the stirring scenes in which he had been engaged, the chivalrous element which doubtless existed in that extraordinary man's character was awakened by the

contagious influence of her enthusiasm, ingenuously revealed by a starting tear, or a flushing smile. It was quite a new amusement to him, by the power of his eloquence and the charm of his picturesque language, to work upon the quick feelings, to excite the interest, and rouse the emotions of a heart whose deep sensibility responded to the least touch, and was far too pure, too good, and too tender for the common intercourse of worldly society. He was pleased, almost in spite of himself, at her intense appreciation of military glory, and would laughingly exclaim that his bride was quite a little Bayard in petticoats. His mother, on the contrary, was indignant that Judithe so ill seconded, as she supposed, her earnest desire that her son should abandon his present position in the Emperor's army, and

by her ridiculous flatteries, as she termed the poor girl's involuntary sympathy with his successes and wishes, encourage his absurd mania for knight-errantry, which would only end in his ruin and in her despair. Her temper grew every day more bitter, and she could never see her son or Judithe without addressing to them the most cutting reproaches. Her health too was rapidly impaired by this perpetual conflict with others and with herself.

The epoch fixed for the marriage was not now far distant. M. de Bonneval was often absent from Paris, and paid visits of several days to his brother and other friends in the country. On these occasions the marquise vented her displeasure by harsh and scornful words purposely dropped in Judithe's hearing; sometimes plainly hinting to

her that she had made no way in her son's affections, that she had failed in obtaining, and probably would never obtain, any influence over him; that her own hopes and expectations were in consequence disappointed. Judithe, though cut to the heart by these remarks, always answered them with gentleness.

“Did you ever suppose,” she one day said, “that he would at once become attached to me? Surely it requires both time and patience to win a heart already possessed by a love of pleasure and a passion for glory. Alas! I see it but too plainly! I must needs love him long and well before I can expect that he will love me in return. And then I am not, perhaps, acquainted with the arts that subdue at once a man's heart. ‘I have not cunning to be strange,’ as the English Juliet

says,¹ but surely a wife's patient and devoted affection is, in the end, the surest means of winning a noble-hearted husband's love."

This angelic sweetness would have disarmed a sterner spirit than that of the Marquise de Bonneval, who, when not agitated by passion, easily did justice to the virtues of her son's intended bride. She would fold her in her arms, weep bitterly, and exclaim:

"But how can you endure the thoughts of his going back to Hungary? That is what I cannot understand."

"I wish him to feel," Judithe replied, "that I have never voluntarily stood in the way of his interest, his reputation, or his happiness. If I could flatter myself that the sight of my grief would give him pain I would part with him without shedding a tear,

¹ "But trust me gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those who have more cunning to be strange."

Romeo and Juliet.

even though my heart should break the next moment. There are persons in the world that do not seem made to suffer, and others whose vocation it is to stand between them and sorrow. I really believe that I would willingly cut off my hand if it was to make him happy, or to save him from suffering."

"That is sheer idolatry," Madame de Bonneval impatiently exclaimed.

And she was right; nevertheless there was something more touching in that self-sacrificing love, misplaced and mistaken as it was, than in her own morbid and selfish affection.

END OF VOL. I.



Under the Especial Patronage of
HER MAJESTY & H.R.H. THE PRINCE CONSORT.

NOW READY, IN ONE VOLUME, ROYAL 8vo.,
WITH THE ARMS BEAUTIFULLY ENGRAVED,
Handsomely Bound, with Gilt Edges,

LODGE'S PEERAGE

AND

BARONETAGE, For 1858.

ARRANGED AND PRINTED FROM
THE PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS OF THE NOBILITY,
AND CORRECTED THROUGHOUT TO THE PRESENT TIME.

LODGE'S PEERAGE AND BARONETAGE is acknowledged to be the most complete, as well as the most elegant, work of the kind that has ever appeared. As an established and authentic authority on all questions respecting the family histories, honours, and connexions of the titled aristocracy, no work has ever stood so high. It is published under the especial patronage of Her Majesty, and His Royal Highness the Prince Consort, and is annually corrected throughout, from the personal communications of the Nobility. It is the only work of its class in which, *the type being kept constantly standing*, every correction is made in its proper place to the date of publication, an advantage which gives it supremacy over all its competitors. Independently of its full and authentic information respecting the existing Peers and Baronets of the realm, the most sedulous attention is given in its pages to the collateral branches of the various noble families, and the names of many thousand individuals are introduced, which do not appear in other records of the titled classes. Nothing can exceed the facility of its arrangements, or the beauty of its typography and binding, and for its authority, correctness and embellishments, the work is justly entitled to the high place it occupies on the tables of Her Majesty and the Nobility.

LODGE'S PEERAGE AND BARONETAGE

LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

Historical View of the Peerage.	Account of the Archbishops and Bishops of England, Ireland, and the Colonies.
Parliamentary Roll of the House of Lords.	The Baronetage, alphabetically arranged.
English, Scotch, and Irish Peers, in their orders of Precedence.	Alphabetical List of Surnames assumed by members of Noble Families.
Alphabetical List of Peers of Great Britain and the United Kingdom, holding superior rank in the Scotch or Irish Peerage.	Alphabetical List of the Second Titles of Peers, usually borne by their Eldest Sons.
Alphabetical List of Scotch and Irish Peers, holding superior titles in the Peerage of Great Britain and the United Kingdom.	Alphabetical Index to the Daughters of Dukes, Marquises, and Earls, who, having married Commoners, retain the title of Lady before their own Christian and their Husbands' Surnames.
A Collective List of Peers, in their order of Precedence.	Alphabetical Index to the Daughters of Viscounts and Barons, who, having married Commoners, are styled Honourable Mrs ; and, in case of the husband being a Baronet or Knight, Honourable Lady.
Table of Precedency among Men.	Mottoes alphabetically arranged and translated.
Table of Precedency among Women.	
The Queen and Royal Family.	
The House of Saxe Coburg-Gotha.	
Peers of the Blood Royal.	
The Peerage, alphabetically arranged.	
Families of such Extinct Peers as have left Widows or Issue.	
Alphabetical List of the Surnames of all the Peers.	

"A work which corrects all errors of former works. It is the production of a herald, we had almost said, by birth, but certainly, by profession and studies, Mr. Lodge, the Norroy King of Arms. It is a most useful publication."—*Times*.

"Lodge's Peerage must supersede all other works of the kind, for two reasons; first, it is on a better plan; and, secondly, it is better executed. We can safely pronounce it to be the readiest, the most useful, and exactest of modern works on the subject."—*Spectator*.

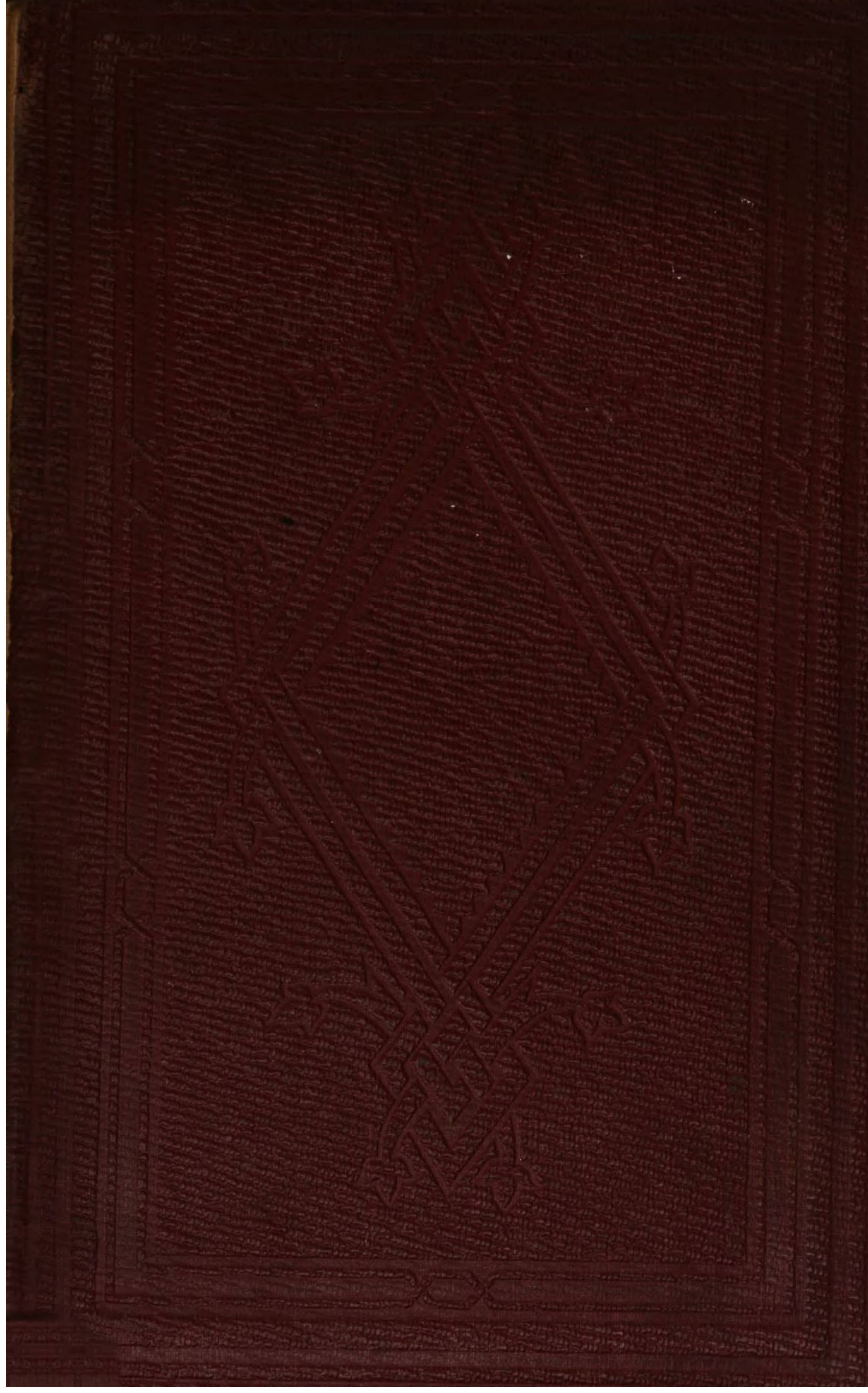
"This work derives great value from the high authority of Mr. Lodge. The plan is excellent."—*Literary Gazette*.

"This work should form a portion of every gentleman's library. At all times, the information which it contains, derived from official sources exclusively at the command of the author, is of importance to most classes of the community; to the antiquary it must be invaluable, for implicit reliance may be placed on its contents."—*Globe*.

"The production of Edmund Lodge, Esq., Norroy King of Arms, whose splendid Biography of Illustrious Personages stands an unrivalled specimen of historical literature, and magnificent illustration. Of Mr. Lodge's talent for the task he has undertaken, we need only appeal to his former productions. It contains the exact state of the Peerage as it now exists, with all the Collateral Branches, their Children, with all the Marriages of the different individuals connected with each family."—*John Bull*.

HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET, LONDON.
TO BE HAD OF ALL BOOKSELLERS THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM.

50



Fullerton, Georgiana

The Countess de Bonneval: her Life and Letters In 2 Volumes

Bd.: I

London 1858

P.o.angl. 129 cbc-1

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10746530-4